

## AN ABSENT PRESENCE: JERUSALEM IN MONTSERRAT\*

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### RESUM

L'objectiu d'aquest estudi és cercar la presència de la ciutat de Jerusalem a la montanya i al monestir de Montserrat, principalment entre els segles setze i dinou. Alguns mites sobre la fundació del monestir de Montserrat foren enriquits amb històries bíbliques i temes del folklore local, creant noves arrels sagrades per augmentar el prestigi del complex devocional del santuari.

Sorpren, però, que en una època en què es copiaren monuments dels llocs sants de Jerusalem en altres zones de la Península Ibèrica, les associacions simbòliques entre Montserrat i Jerusalem no hagin deixat senyals clares en els dissenys dels seus blocs monàstics. Aquesta manca fa pensar en una presència que es podria dir invisible de Jerusalem a Montserrat. Aquest nou examen de les tradicions en les fonts escrites i en les seves il·lustracions, que associen Montserrat amb Jerusalem, mostren algun exemple de l'esmentada presència de la Ciutat Santa i suggereix algun dels motius de la seva invisibilitat en representacions emblemàtiques del conjunt montserratí. Posteriorment, l'examen de gravats conservats en l'arxiu del monestir, permetrà noves interpretacions del discurs religiós i sociopolític de les institucions catalanes en la creació de noves tradicions.

*Paraules Clau:* Montserrat, Jerusalem, segles xvi-xix.

### ABSTRACT

This paper aims to trace the absent presence of Jerusalem in Montserrat mainly from the sixteenth to the late nineteenth century. The foundation myths and narrative of Montserrat are seasoned with biblical and local stories and legends that refer to Jerusalem and enhanced the prestige of the devotional complex by endowing it

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with ancient sacred roots. Puzzlingly, even though at the time monumental translations of Jerusalem were being created in other geo-cultural areas of the Iberian Peninsula, Central Europe, and North Italy, it seems that the symbolical associations to Jerusalem did not leave clear traces in the design of the complex and its representations. This lack of correspondence has led us to think of an absent presence of Jerusalem in Montserrat.

This re-examination of traditions and metaphors associating Montserrat with Jerusalem turns some instances of the subtle presence of the Holy City more visible, and suggests some reasons for its invisibility in emblematic representations of the Catalanian mountain. Not least important, it is expected to assist us in the next phase – the examination of the unpublished images. Such study may shed an additional light of the religious and socio-political discourse in the area and beyond it, as well as on the reciprocity between the influential Catholic institutions in Catalonia (and Spain as a whole) in the creation of new traditions.

*Keywords:* Montserrat, Jerusalem, XVI-XIX century.

*'Venite, ascendamus ad montem Domini, ad domum dei Jacob'*, calls Pere de Burgos, abbot of Montserrat from 1512 to 1536 and its first historian, quoting Isaiah 2, 2. Pere de Burgos places this call at the head of his *Libro d'los Milagros hechos a invocación de nra señora de Montserrate: y dela Fundacion Hospitalidad y Orde de su sc̃ta casa; y del Sitio della y d'sus hermitas*, published as anonymous in 1536.<sup>1</sup> The same verse is enclosed in the illustration enhancing the book (Fig. 1),<sup>2</sup> which appears on the first page and invites the reader to travel through time and space to Jerusalem in the mythical Catalanian mountain. This invitation would develop into a rich net of symbolical associations of Montserrat with the Holy City.

The Montserrat Mountain, a cliffy massif located in the heart of Catalonia both geographically and figuratively, houses a devotional complex that comprises a sacred grotto, a sanctuary, hermitages, and a monastery as well as paths to and between them. Crosses mark the paths and crown the pinnacles of the mountain, calling to reflection and prayer. Montserrat also is a memory site, since it allows a re-visitation of remembered events, which in this case are legends that became part of the collective identity of Catalonia.

Narratives of supernatural character and rich in biblical associations were adopted to enhance the prestige and influence of the monastery and its shrine, and in this sense the history of Montserrat does not differ from that of other sacred mountains. What differentiates Montserrat is the extent and strength of the symbolical associations with Jerusalem that were created between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries; the associations explain the mountain's unique shape, which is also conveyed in the etymology of its name, the special sanctity of the statue of the Mare de Déu that sacralizes it, the symbolism of the path of Seven Joys and Seven Sorrows of the Virgin that leads to the sanctuary, and the merits of the people of Catalonia as a

new Israel. Pere de Burgos noteworthyly remarked that the mountain and the sanctuary of the Virgin that houses her image form one inseparable whole; God himself put them together and consecrated the site, expressing his predilection for this territory that houses the miraculous image of his Mother.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, the various biblical associations and miracles create significant layers of symbolism that have an effect on the entire devotional set.

The exceptional shape of the massif and the many miracles worked by the image of the Virgin are explained, emphasized, and praised in books on the history of Montserrat, poems dedicated to the sacred mountain, and accounts by monks, pilgrims and other travellers. As might be expected, also the emblematic images of the Montserrat Mountain and sanctuary are centred precisely on these two elements: the fantastically shaped mountain and the image of the Virgin. Contrarily, narrative images add schemes of the monastery, the hermitages, and the crosses topping the peaks, which indeed are an integral part of the complex, but they are not paradigmatic signifiers. The mountain's singular morphology and the miraculous image have been named in independent researches by Francesc Roma i Casanovas and Ignasi Fernández Terricabras, as the two main reasons for the strong attraction that the Montserrat Mountain has held for Catalonians and peoples from other nations for centuries.<sup>4</sup>

1. The book is commonly referred to as *Libro de la historia y milagros hechos a invocación de Nuestra Señora de Montserrat*; it has two parts, the first is dedicated to the history of the monastery and second to the miracles of the Virgin. The book was reedited many times and was soon translated to German, French and Italian, exerting much influence on historians and readers as a whole. Anselm Albareda, who wrote the most complete history of the monastery and a bibliography of its monks in the sixteenth century, said that 'because of priority of time and his personality [Pere de Burgos] merits the first place among the historians of Montserrat'; see Anselm Albareda, 'Bibliografia dels monjos de Montserrat (seglo xvi)', *Analecta Montserratensia*, 2 (1918), pp. 43-142 (esp. pp. 23-25, 147-54). <http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/portal/Abadia>. Accessed 2 January 2012. Also important is the study by Xavier Altés i Aguiló, 'L'edició pòstuma de la Història de Montserrat de l'Abat Pedro de Burgos', *Montserrat - Butlletí del Santuari*, 2a època, núm. 12 (1985), pp. 33-38.
2. Our illustration belongs to the 1550 edition by Pere de Montpezat, Barcelona.
3. *Libro de la historia y milagros*, I: Prolog, A4.
4. Francesc Roma i Casanovas, 'La construcció medial de la muntanya a Catalunya (Segles XV-XX). Una mirada al paisatge des de la geografia cultural' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2000), and Ignasi Fernández Terricabras, 'Montserrat, montagne sacrée. Spiritualisation du territoire montagnard dans un massif Catalan (XVIe-XVIIIe siècles)', in: *Montagnes sacrées d'Europe. Actes du colloque 'Religion et montagnes', Tarbes, 30 mai - 2 juin 2002*, ed. by Serge Brunet, Dominique Julia and Nicole Lemaître, *Histoire Moderne* 49, Université Paris I, Pantheon-Sorbonne (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2005), pp. 193-206. See also Francesc Roma i Casanovas, 'El paradís indicible. Ecosimbologia del topònim montserratí modern' (unpublished master's thesis, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 1999). However, the presence of Jerusalem in Montserrat was out of the scope of their studies.

The mythical interpretations of the configuration of the Catalanian mountain and the relic it houses clearly point to Jerusalem as the source and reason of these two phenomena. The Jerusalemite origins of these two immanent qualities also turn the mountain and the image of the Virgin into carriers of the special blessings of the Holy City; moreover, even though physical similarities between Montserrat and Jerusalem seem to exist only in these interpretations and in allegories, each and both of them justify the perception of the Catalanian devotional complex as a symbolical translation of Jerusalem.

We ponder why, even if Montserrat cannot be considered a regular translation of Jerusalem, the mythic Jerusalemite origins of its two main identifying elements, as defined in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, have not been studied in that context; this, although precisely at that time, devotional sites presented as symbolical translations of Jerusalem became an effective means of Catholic indoctrination that also advanced the spiritual and material interests of the monasteries that established them.<sup>5</sup> It also puzzles us that the Jerusalemite origins of these two identifiers seem to have found only subtle expression in the design of the devotional complex and its visual images.<sup>6</sup> If so, why did this happen?

Our examination of the presence of Jerusalem in Montserrat leads us to think of a special kind of presence, an 'absent presence' that regarding Montserrat is broad in scope and long-lasting. By the concept of an absent presence we mean the implicit references in any sort of message, differing from the explicit contents; the absent presence is the implicit idea that hides beyond the lines of a narrative, the sounds of a musical composition, the margins of a painting, or the design and surrounding space of a monument. The absent presence would be the immaterial, invisible factor that organizes words, sounds, images and any other mediation vehicle into something meaningful.

5. See Antonio Bonet Correa, 'Sacromontes y calvarios en España, Portugal y America Latina', in *La "Gerusalemme" di San Vivaldo e i sacri monti in Europa: Firenze-San Vivaldo, 11-13 settembre 1986*, ed. by Sergio Gensini, Centro internazionale di studi 'La Gerusalemme di San Vivaldo', 1 (Montaione: Pacini, 1989), pp. 174-213; José Miguel Muñoz Jiménez, 'Sobre la "Jerusalén Restaurada": Los calvarios barrocos de España', *Archivo español de arte*, 274 (1996), pp. 157-169; Cesario Gil Atrio, 'España, cuna del Via Crucis', *Archivo Ibero-Americano*, 11 (1951), pp. 63-92; Trevor Johnson, 'Gardening for God: Carmelite Deserts and the Sacralisation of Natural Space in Counter-Reformation Spain,' in *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Will Coster and Andrew Spicer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 193-210.
6. The visual images of the Montserrat complex have been only partially published; see Josep de C. Laplana, 'La imatge de la Mare de Déu de Montserrat al llarg dels segles', in: *Nigra sum: iconografia de Santa Maria de Montserrat*, ed. by Josep de C. Laplana (Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 1995), pp. 14-39; Concepción Alarcón Román, 'Las ilustraciones marianas de la leyenda de Montserrat', *Revista de dialectología y tradiciones populares*, 63: 2 (2008), pp. 169-196. Unfortunately we had to come to terms with limitations and postpone the examination of the unpublished images until the next phase of our study.

Four factors lead to propose that Jerusalem is 'invisibly' present in Montserrat. Firstly, the fact that the Montserrat Mountain's craggy shape is unique and therefore an identifying signifier, and that this shape has been explained as a mirror of the Golgotha/ Calvary Mount's split when Jesus died on the cross; this association was first drawn sometime before the 1270s,<sup>7</sup> and by the mid-seventeenth century spread and replaced almost all other traditions on the morphology of the mountain; noticeably, it was still considered a true fact by religious authorities in the secular-minded late nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup> Secondly, by the 1660s the belief that the Virgin's image had been crafted by St. Luke the Evangelist in Jerusalem became widely spread—<sup>9</sup> a significant development since the late fourteenth-century tradition that the prodigious image was '*non invenitur in quam esse manibus hominum factam*', that is to say not made by man, or that its origins were mysterious.<sup>10</sup> Thirdly, by the mid-seventeenth century it was said that the image laid buried in a cave in Montserrat as if in a tomb, and was miraculously found because the mountain that split at the death of Jesus revealed it at the propitious time;<sup>11</sup> and last but not the least important: in medieval thought copies often participated in a mystical unity with their originals, and translated holy places, relics both primary and secondary, and sacred images could be perceived as consubstantial with their prototypes. In the light of these four parameters we maintain that Jerusalem was steadily and continuously present in the devotional space of Montserrat, in an ever growing scope from the times of the Counter-Reformation up until the revolutionary scientific discoveries of the mid-nineteenth century.

7. It appears in the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* of Alfons X the Wise, a rich compilation of earlier traditions, devotional texts, poems, and musical notations. See John Keller, 'Montserrat in the "Cantigas"', in: *Collectanea Hispanica: Folklore and Brief narrative Studies* (Delaware: Juan de la Cuesta, 1987), pp. 211-14 (Cantiga 113), and also below.

8. See, for example, the strong statement by Miquel Muntadas i Romaní, abbot of Montserrat, in his *Montserrat: su pasado, su presente y su porvenir, ó, lo que fué hasta su destrucción el año 1811, lo que es desde su destrucción y lo que será en adelante. Historia compuesta en vista de los documentos existentes en el archivo del monasterio, por el abad el M.ltre. Sr. D. Miguel Muntadas* (Imprenta de Pablo Roca, á cargo de Luis Roca, 1867). eBook, digitalized 30 October 2009, pp. 14-18; see also Francesc de Paula Crusellas, *Nueva historia del santuario y monasterio de Nuestra Señora de Monserrat* (Barcelona: Tipografía católica, 1896), pp. 15-16, and below.

9. The diffusion of this story was advanced by Friar Gregorio de Argaiiz in his 1668 publication of the false chronicles of the monk Hauberto Hispalense, affirming that the Montserrat image of the Mare de Déu had been made by St. Luke and brought by St. Peter to Barcelona. Quoted by Xavier Altés i Aguiló, 'La santa imatge de Montserrat i la seva "morenor" a través de la documentació i de la història', in *La imatge de la Mare de Déu de Montserrat*, ed. by Francesc Xavier Altés et al. (Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 2003), pp. 101-102.

10. Pere de Burgos, *Libro de la historia y milagros*, ch. 1: Historia, fol. 22.

11. Alarcón Román, 'Las ilustraciones marianas', p. 186; Laplana, 'La imatge de la Mare de Déu', pp. 15-16.

An indirect support to our proposition is the spread of various types of translations of Jerusalem at that period of time in other geographical and cultural areas of the Iberian Peninsula, Central Europe, and North Italy; many of them were certainly known in Catalonia.

Indeed, within the category of visual carriers of Jerusalem's presence, the monumental recreations of the Holy City as a whole environment – differently from a translation by means of a copy of the Holy Sepulchre, which is its most representative monument – are the most prominent yet also the least acknowledged. The presence of Jerusalem in foundation myths and in traditions constructed to endow a site with the desired sacredness is only now being comprehensively studied.<sup>12</sup>

Most translations of Jerusalem as devotional complexes evoke elements from the topography of the Holy City, or of a sacred site there, or of a monument at a holy place and these similar elements, real or imagined, transfer the blessings of the original. Moreover, in Christian tradition and practice the blessings are carried from the original sacred places and monuments in the Holy Land to their translations beyond the Land of the Bible also through 'symbolical copies',<sup>13</sup> achieved by the adoption and adaption of myths, by the drawing of allegorical parallels, by liturgical and devotional practices, by relics, and even by dedications; that is to say, not only through similarities in form or structure. Therefore, the devotional complexes become multimedia projections of the Holy City that transport its sacredness and blessings. To reinforce the functions of the devotional complexes, translations of Jerusalem usually contain local elements of religious and national importance, making them both representations of the Holy Places and reflections of the respective local community.

Our main sources, in tracing the absent presence of Jerusalem in Montserrat from the sixteenth to the late nineteenth century, the period when most of the symbolical associations with Jerusalem were drawn and continuously enriched and reinforced, are books on the history of the Montserrat Abbey and on the cultic practices there, which were usually written by local monks, and travel accounts by ecclesiastical visitors and learned secular travellers. All these narratives are richly seasoned with stories and legends, some of them rooted in ancient traditions and others new constructs. We expect that a re-examination of the variegated traditions

12. See the research project Spectrum | Visual Translations of Jerusalem, at the European Forum of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, <http://www.spectrum.huji.ac.il/>

13. See the pioneering work by Richard Krautheimer 'Introduction to an Iconography of Medieval Architecture', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 5 (1942), pp. 1-33, and revised edition in: *Studies in Early Christian, Medieval and Renaissance Art*, ed. by James S. Ackerman et al. (New York: New York University Press, 1969). See also the recent study by Catherine Carver McCurrach, 'Renovatio Reconsidered: Richard Krautheimer and the Iconography of Architecture', *Gesta*, 50: 1 (2011), pp. 41-69.

that associate Montserrat with Jerusalem in those sources will open new paths to trace similar associations in visual media and cultic rites.

In addition, in view of the intra- and inter-regional influences between monastic orders and institutions, the tracing of a subtle presence of Jerusalem in Montserrat may assist us in the study of other devotional complexes where the Holy City is variously recalled in texts and local rituals, whereas the visual presence is less clear. Such study could shed light on the religious and socio-political discourse in the area and beyond it, as well as on the reciprocity between the influential Catholic institutions in Europe and Jerusalem in the creation of new traditions.

### MONTSERRAT

The Montserrat Mountain is located in the central region of Catalonia, about 60 km from Barcelona. Montserrat, meaning 'sawed', or 'serrated' mountain, describes the peculiar aspect of this sedimentary-rock conglomerate, which was formed as a result of differential erosion and weathering that produced highly distinctive steep cliffs and high peaks. In an area of about 10 by 5 km, this relatively small range amazes by its brisk rise in steps of impressive vertical cliffs and is visible from far away. Its uniquely shaped rocks have aroused the imagination of locals and visitors, inspiring myths, traditions, and works of art and literature.

Montserrat began as a series of hermitages. The earliest documents date from 888, at the time of Count Guifred the Hairy of Barcelona, when four small constructions were donated to the Monastery of Ripoll.<sup>14</sup> However, Sant Jeroni, Montserrat's 1236 meters culminant point, may have been a preferred site of hermits much earlier and the first miracles were possibly worked through them before there was an image of the Virgin. Recent studies have demonstrated that many Catalan shrines exist at or near the sites of early medieval hermitages, many of them caves. This would be an alternate historical explanation for the isolated location of images accredited with miraculous invention legends.<sup>15</sup>

The Montserrat sanctuary is located not on one of the peaks but at an altitude of 720 meters, at the site that according to a foundation legend was chosen by the image of the Virgin that revealed itself in a cave in the year 880.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, the foundation myth of Montserrat based on the invention of the image of the Virgin is associated to another myth: that of the repentant monk Gari and Count Guifred, who is considered the founder of the Comtal

14. Anselm M. Albareda, *Historia de Montserrat* (Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 1996), pp. 9-10.

15. William A. Christian Jr, *Apparitions in Late Medieval and Renaissance Spain* (Princeton University Press, 1989), p. 113

16. Laplana, 'La imatge de la Mare de Déu', pp. 15-16.



House of Catalonia;<sup>17</sup> therefore religious belief and national identity are closely interwoven.

A coenobium was founded in Montserrat in c. 1025 by Abbot Oliba of the Monastery of Ripoll, who is acknowledged as the spiritual father of Old Catalonia and also belonged to the family of Guifred the Hairy. The coenobium became a monastery dependent on Ripoll in 1082, and an independent abbey in 1409;<sup>18</sup> in this period of time it developed and acquired much prestige. Despite turbulent times during the nineteenth century that twice ended in the destruction of the monastery and the expulsion of the monks, and despite the damage suffered during the Civil War, the firm roots of Montserrat in the collective identity of Catalonia facilitated the reconstruction and renewed flowering of the complex.

#### ST. MARY THE JERUSALEMITE AND MONTSERRAT

In the late twelfth or the early thirteenth century, the Benedictine monks of the monastery became the custodians of a miraculous statue, the so-called Black Virgin of Montserrat or 'Moreneta', which is a cultic image of the type known as *marededéu*: the enthroned Mother of God holding the Child on her lap. To judge by the evidence provided by the *Llibre Vermell de Montserrat*, which was compiled in the monastery in c. 1399, the first donations of candles and oil lamps were made to the altar of the Virgin in the second half of the twelfth century.<sup>19</sup> Yet, the donation of such objects does not imply the presence of a sculpted image. However, a candle for the whole Easter period that was offered in 1176, as well as perpetual oil lamps that were offered since 1192, may indicate that the present, late twelfth century statue already presided from the altar.<sup>20</sup> It was at this time, the late twelfth and early thirteenth century, that a church to house the miracle-working image was built, and Montserrat developed its function and tradition as a monastery and a sanctuary.

17. The story of the miraculous invention of the Virgin's image and its perfect combination with the other foundation myth, that of the monk Gari who sinned, repented and did penitence to merit the heavenly pardon through Mary, is out of the scope of our study. This topic has been studied by Concepción Alarcón Román, 'Clasificación y fuentes de la leyenda de Montserrat', *Ilu. Revista de ciencias de las religiones*, 12 (2007), pp. 5-28, esp. pp. 6-13.

18. Albareda, *Historia de Montserrat*, p. 13-14; Laplana, 'La imatge de la Mare de Déu', pp. 17-18.

19. The manuscript (Biblioteca de l'Abadia de Montserrat, MS 1) includes, among others, a collection of theological and devotional texts, an account of miracles of the Virgin, songs and their musical notation, privileges, indulgencies, homilies, and miniatures. See *Llibre Vermell de Montserrat (ms. 1): Edición facsímil parcial del ms. nº 1 de la Biblioteca de la Abadía de Montserrat*, introd. by Dom Francesc Xavier Altés i Aguiló, *Llibres del mil·lenari*, 2 (Barcelona: Fundació Revista de Catalunya, 1989); Laplana, 'La imatge de la Mare de Déu', p. 20.

20. Laplana, 'La imatge de la Mare de Déu', pp. 18-29, observing that such statue was installed in Santa Maria de Ripoll only in the early thirteenth century. Penitent pilgrims took part in prayers, mass, and devotional rituals; they confessed, lighted candles and made spiritual and material offerings in recognition for blessings and miracles, or to ask for them.



The earliest known illumination that presents the sacred *marededéu* appears in the *Llibre Vermell*,<sup>21</sup> and not much later, in the early fifteenth century, may have appeared the legend that dates the miraculous finding of the sacred image in 880, at the time that the first chapels were established; this legend was largely enriched in the following centuries.<sup>22</sup> In the year 1668 Father Gregorio de Argaiz published the false *Chronicon* of the Benedictine monk Hauberto Hispalense, which would have been written in the tenth century and in Argaiz's opinion 'contains many truths and historical concordances'; based on the *Chronicon*, Argaiz affirmed that the *marededéu* of Montserrat had been made in Jerusalem by St. Luke and brought to Barcelona by St. Peter.<sup>23</sup> This legend, which endowed much prestige on the monastery, was rapidly spread and further elaborated. Thus, not long after then, in the year 1675, Argaiz himself specified that the image was crafted by the Apostle St. Luke at the time the Virgin lived her mortal life, that is to say, 'looking at the original and prototype', although he could not justify that St. Luke, who was a painter, also carved the image.<sup>24</sup> This process reached a climax in 1677 with the publication of Gregorio de Argaiz's influential book *La Perla de Cataluña: Historia de Nuestra Señora de Monserrate*. Argaiz elaborated on the legends related to the mountain, the sacred image, and the sanctuary; he popularized the epithet of the image, 'the Jerusalemite', which emphasized its invaluable origins and also the story that it was earlier venerated in Barcelona, in a church dedicated to her by St. Paciano as the *Beatae Mariae Hyrosolimitae*.<sup>25</sup> This detailed account further stresses the special significance of a Jerusalemite origin, more so since many images of the Virgin were miraculously found in Spain, France, and other areas in Europe ever since the twelfth century. Therefore, the Montserrat *marededéu* was an exceptional relic that could claim to be

21. Idem, p. 20.

22. Concepción Alarcón, 'Las versiones medievales de la leyenda de Montserrat', *Studia monastica*, 49:1 (2007), pp. 29-73 (30-32, 37-38, and esp. 50-51, 68).

23. *Hauberti Hispalensis monachi benedictini chronicon*. The author of the false chronicon, Antonio de Lupián Zapata (d. 1667), was a Benedictine monk at the Monastery of Dumio (Braga). See also Xavier Altés i Aguiló, 'La santa imatge de Montserrat i la seva "morenor" a través de la documentació i de la història', in *La imatge de la Mare de Déu de Montserrat*, ed. by Francesc Xavier Altés et al. (Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 2003), pp. 101-102.

24. Idem, p. 102. According to Francisco de Paula de Fors Casamayor, *La Estrella del Montserrat: Impresiones y recuerdos de esta montaña y de su célebre monasterio, su descripción, su historia y sus tradiciones* (Madrid: Librería de la Sra. Viuda é hijos de D. J. Cuesta, 1867), p. 17, Gregorio de Argaiz would have read about the Jerusalemite origins of the Virgin's image in the *Chronicles of Liutprando*, actually a late sixteenth century forge by the Jesuit Jeronimo Roman de la Higuera, but Argaiz quotes both of them in his *La Perla de Cataluña: Historia de Nuestra Señora de Monserrate* (Madrid: Imprenta de Andrés García de la Iglesia, 1677), pp. 14-15.

25. Argaiz, *La Perla de Cataluña*, pp. 14-15. We may note as one example of his influence a century later, the many quotations in Fors Casamayor, *La Estrella del Montserrat*, as in pp. 16-17.

sacred because it was invested with the aura of having been crafted by St. Luke from the image of the living Virgin, brought to Spain by St. Peter, the prince of the Apostles and founder of the Western church, and already proven to be a conduit of miraculous power. Such foundation legends help to construct the sacredness of a local landscape, and they do so in a manner that considerably predates the beginnings of Christian pilgrimage to these sites.<sup>26</sup>

Argaiz also solved the mysterious question of the invention of the image in a cave in the Montserrat massif, and not, as might be expected, in the church that it sacralized, although by means of a rather conventional formula: the author tells that for fear that the Muslims would invade the city and damage the sacred image, this 'pearl of Catalonia' was hidden in the mountain by the Bishop of Barcelona together with Duke Eurigon on 22 April 718, as documented by the *Chronicon Hispalense*.<sup>27</sup> Lastly, Argaiz informs that the image was miraculously found in 880, that is to say, at the time of the foundation of the chapels by Guifred the Hairy, the first Count of Barcelona. Stereotypically, the author also tells that ecclesiastical authorities tried to take the prodigious image to their church, but after reaching a certain point on the mountain – the image refused to be moved.<sup>28</sup> This was a most significant heavenly sign: it was the Virgin's wish to stay in Montserrat.

Later writers follow Gregorio de Argaiz's work. Significantly in our context, they elaborate on Argaiz's stories and add elements that evidence the importance attributed to the origins of the Montserrat image in Jerusalem. For example, in his *Història inèdita de Montserrat*, dated a little after 1713, Friar Miquel López repeated the stories spread by Argaiz and specified that the Virgin herself had wrapped the image in a fabric that she had personally woven, '*arctissimo brandhiorum vinculo*', and that it was the contact with this fabric that assisted the worshipper to cause the image

26. On this topic see James Bugslag, 'Local Pilgrimages and their Shrines in Pre-Modern Europe', *Peregrinations* (2007), pp. 1-26 (pp. 7-9, 14), at <http://peregrinations.kenyon.edu>

27. Argaiz, *La Perla de Cataluña*, pp. 14-15. A great many of these legends seek to justify the special presence of Mary or Jesus in specific, sometimes very small communities. What is striking among shrine legends is that, although they are tailored to specific localities and circumstances, the same *topoi* and patterns recur frequently in many of them. The pattern chosen by Gregorio de Argaiz for the Montserrat image was indeed the most common. See Bugslag, 'Local Pilgrimages and their Shrines', pp. 6-7.

28. Argaiz, *La Perla de Cataluña*, pp. 24-25.

29. Laplana, 'La imatge de la Mare de Déu', p. 23.

30. For the sources of the Cantigas on the Virgin of Montserrat, see Cebrià Baraut, 'Les "Cantiques d'Alfons el Savi" i "El primitiu *Liber miraculorum* de Nostra Dona de Montserrat"', *Estudis Romànics*, 2 (1949-50), pp. 79-92; see also Keller, 'Montserrat in the "Cantigas"', pp. 205-6.

31. Josep Gudiol, 'De peregrins i peregrinatges religiosos catalans', *Analecta sacra tarraconensia: Revista de ciències historico-eclésiàstiques*, 3 (1927), pp. 93-119 (pp. 101-119); Baraut, 'Les Cantiques', p. 81.

to work great miracles.<sup>29</sup> To resume, ever since the mid-seventeenth century the Montserrat image was Jerusalemite and an authentic portrait of the living Virgin, therefore it performed special miracles that further verified and enhanced its sanctity.

The fame of the Montserrat Virgin had spread since the early thirteenth century throughout Catalonia and the neighbouring reigns in prose, poetry and songs that celebrated the image's works of healing and grace. The *Cantigas de Santa Maria* of King Alfonso X (1252-84), which is the richest collection of miracles worked by images of Virgin in the Spanish Lands, includes six miracles by the Virgin of Montserrat.<sup>30</sup> The sanctuary became a popular destination of worshippers who arrived in processions from the nearby lands and also attracted pilgrims from southern France, the Mediterranean islands, and even Italy, as well as pilgrims on their way to Santiago de Compostela, Roma, and Jerusalem.<sup>31</sup> The abbey profited from the increased fame and traffic, and by the mid-fifteenth century it already was the major shrine in Catalonia.<sup>32</sup> Montserrat was a well-organized devotional centre and several Montserrat monks wrote and collected stories, poetry, and songs in praise of the Moreneta that not only honoured but also publicized it; moreover, in the late fifteenth century, when the monastery established one of the first printing presses in the area, its abbots and high ranking monks effectively made use of the new technologies to publish hundreds of books, indulgences for the brotherhoods, and also many stamps with the image of the Virgin that were sold to the ever-growing number of *romeros* and pilgrims.<sup>33</sup>

'MONS IN QUO BENEPLACITUM EST DEO HABITARE IN EO' (Ps 67 (68), 17)

The concept of miraculously found images of the Virgin that choose a certain site to stay there, in order to care for believers who venerate her, is not self-evident. The divine choice of a site for a revelation and performance of miracles implies that there are favoured places to serve the divinity and beg for misericordy and help. The map of such sites shows that many of them are located in mountains, like the Montserrat Holy Cave and sanctuary.

The Christian concept that there are 'mountains of the Lord', which he has chosen as his dwelling, has its roots in the Jewish Bible and was most probably reinforced by the adoption and adaption of local pagan traditions.<sup>34</sup>

32. Christian, *Apparitions*, p. 111.

33. Anselm Albareda, 'La imprenta de Montserrat (segles xv-xvi)', *Analecta Monserratina*, 2 (1918), pp. 11-166; Fernández Terricabras, 'Montserrat, montagne sacrée', p. 195. *Romeros* are the worshippers who come in cultic processions (*romerías*) to ask for the favours of the Virgin or as an ex-voto for her assistance.

34. This concept, specifically regarding the Montserrat Mountain, has been addressed by Ignasi Fernández Terricabras in his 'Montserrat, montagne sacrée', and by Francesc Roma i Casanovas in his 'La construcció medial de la muntanya'. We elaborate on some of the ideas presented in their works.

'I dwell in a high and holy place', says God to his people through the prophet Isaiah (57, 15). This idea is also implied in the lyric Psalm 121, which opens with an emotive plea: 'I look to the mountains / where will my help come from?' In another example, Psalm 20, 2, the wish is expressed that 'May he [the Lord] send you help from his Temple and give you aid from Mount Zion', whereas Psalm 132, 13-14, explains: 'For the Lord has chosen Zion; he has desired it for his habitation: "This is my resting place forever; here I will reside, for I have desired it"'. As an echo, the Apostle John tells in the Book of Revelation, 14, 1: 'Then I looked, and there was the Lamb standing on Mount Zion'.

Following the Scriptures, at the opening of his *Libro de la historia y milagros hechos a invocación de Nuestra Señora de Montserrat*, published in 1536, Abbot Pere de Burgos invites the reader calling: '*Venite, ascendamus ad montem Domini, ad domum dei Jacob*', and likewise referring to the divinely chosen biblical mountain the Montserrat monk Matthieu Olivier describes, in his 1617 *Histoire de l'abbaye et des miracles de Notre-Dame de Montserrat*, the Catalan sacred mountain as '*mons in quo beneplacitum est Deo habitare in eo*' – 'A mountain in which God is well pleased to dwell', that is to say, as the mountain of God in Psalm 67 (68), 17.<sup>35</sup>

The paradoxical question of an omnipotent and universal Creator who is immanent in his creation and present everywhere at all times, but at the same time also tends to reveal himself in certain circumstances and sites, became especially controversial in the sixteenth century when the Protestant Reformation, as well as Catholic followers of Erasmus (1466?-1536), condemned many of the ideas on which pilgrimage depended, such as the thaumaturgical 'specialization' of saints which they associated to pagan practices, and denied the notion that God's grace was more common at certain places (the basis to the foundation of shrines and pilgrimage).<sup>36</sup> This question was also asked in relation to the Montserrat Mountain, but only to reassert the Counter-Reformation's position. Thus, in 1536 the first historian of Montserrat, Abbot Pere de Burgos, wrote in the prologue to his *Libro de la historia y milagros hechos a invocación de Nuestra Señora de Montserrat*:

God our Lord [has wished] to choose certain sites where shrines were built and dedicated to his holy mother, and to which the faithful come to beg and commend themselves to her [...] safekeeping.<sup>37</sup>

35. Matthieu Olivier, *Histoire de l'abbaye et des miracles de Notre Dame de Montserrat* (Lyon: Guillaume Rouille, 1617), p. 7. See also Ex 3, 12: God replied, 'I will be with you, and when you bring the people out of Egypt, you will worship me on this mountain'. In addition, see the so called 'Song of Moses' in Ex 15, 17: 'You bring them in and plant them on your mountain, the place that you, Lord, have chosen for your home, the Temple that you yourself have built'. Quoted by Roma i Casanovas, 'La construcció medial de la muntanya', p. 65.

36. William A. Christian, Jr., *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Princeton, 1981), pp. 161-62.

37. '*Ha querido [...] Dios nuestro Señor escojer algunos lugares adonde se ayan edificados templos a título de su bendita madre, a los quales acudan los fieles a suplicar y a ampararse del*

Significantly, as noted above, Pere de Burgos specified that God himself expressed his predilection for Montserrat: God put the sanctuary and the mountain together and consecrated them as one inseparable whole that mediated miracles.

The special status of Montserrat as a mountain chosen and sacralized by God was restated again and again, a fact that shows that this was a central topic in the theological and the local political discourse and as such, required to be reaffirmed and strengthened. For example, eighty one years after Abbot Pere de Burgos, in 1617, the Montserrat monk Matthieu Olivier wrote that God chose this mountain as a palace and treasury of this precious relic [the image of the Virgin...] and to be venerated as his house and the Gate of Heaven, and added that it seems that this site was expressly created for the cult of God.<sup>38</sup> Towards the end of the century, in the preface to his *Histoire de Notre-Dame du Mont-Serrat avec la description de l'Abbaye et des hermitages*, published in Paris in 1697 and reprinted many times, the Montserrat monk Louis Montegut remarked:

Although the faith teaches us that God is everywhere, that he knows our most secret thoughts, and that therefore the true worshippers may ask for his favour in any place, there are some places that seem to have been privileged and it seems that His Majesty may be more accessible and his generosity more liberal. Who can know, says Augustine, why God finds pleasure in performing more miracles in certain sites rather than in others?<sup>39</sup>

Most significantly in our context, Louis Montegut argued that **Montserrat was sanctified by the presence of the Virgin [...]** 'and similarly **the holy places of Jerusalem were sanctified by the presence of Jesus Christ**' [our emphasis].<sup>40</sup>

Indeed, the foundation myth of the Montserrat sanctuary was also based on the wish of the Virgin, who through her sculpted image as *Mare de Déu* chose the mountain as her shrine. We already noted that miraculous inventions of images of the Virgin venerated as *mediatrix* and *coredemtrix* were no exception in Spain at the time.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, the Montserrat

*favor de su bendita madre, adonde han llegado con ansia y devocion, alcancen remedio para su tribulacion*'. See Pere de Burgos, *Libro de la historia y milagros*, I: Historia, Prolog, Fol. A 4.

38. Olivier, *Histoire de l'abbaye*, p. 194.

39. 'Quoique la foi nous enseigne que Dieu est par tout, qu'il connoît nos plus secretes pensées, et qu'ainsi les veritables adoreurs peuvent en tout lieu demander des grâces, il y a pourtant des lieux qui sont comme privilegiez et où il semble que Sa Majesté soit plus accessible et sa bonté plus liberale. Qui peut, dit Saint Augustin, sçavoir pourquoi Dieu se plaît à faire plusieurs miracles en certains lieux plutôt qu'en d'autres?'. We consulted the edition published in 1739 in Toulouse, by N. Caranove Fils; for this quotation, see the fifth page of its unpaid preface. See also Fernández Terricabras, 'Montserrat, montagne sacrée', p. 202.

40. 'tels ont aussi été les lieux sacrez de Jérusalem sanctifiez par la presence de Jesus-Christ'. Montegut, *Histoire de Notre-Dame*, sixth and seventh pages of unpaid preface.

41. The zone of devotion can be mapped from lists of miracle books and other publications. Montserrat and Guadalupe were the two poles of Iberian devotion. Other founded virgins in Catalonia were venerated in Nuria, in the Pyrenees, attracting devotees from the present-day provinces of Girona

*marededéu* was not just any miraculously found image of the Virgin: as well remembered, it was one of the invaluable images crafted in Jerusalem by St. Luke and one of the few that were brought to the Iberian Peninsula by the Apostle St. Peter. No doubt, it was the exceptional origin of the image, rather than the miracle of its invention, which endowed it with the unique sacredness and heavenly powers that also sacralized the site that had been prodigiously chosen for its shrine.<sup>42</sup>

#### A TRANSLATED AXIS MUNDI

The conflation of different myths and of particularities of sacred sites was a well-known phenomenon. Already in the Bible there was a tendency to translate and conflate sacred places into a few privileged sites, whose symbolism consequently was greatly enriched and became centres of cult to God. Thus, the call in Isaiah 2, 2 (and Micah 4,2), '*Venite, ascendamus ad montem Domini, ad domum dei Jacob*', quoted by Abbot Pere de Burgos at the head of his 1536 book on the history of Montserrat, had been interpreted both in Jewish and Christian exegesis as identifying the site of Jacob's dream (Gen 28, 11-19) and the Temple Mount as one and the same site.<sup>43</sup> The identification was made possible by the biblical text itself, which does not indicate the exact location where the event took place, informing only that Jacob called the site Bethel, which in Hebrew means 'House of the Lord'.<sup>44</sup>

Moreover, we should also note that Isaiah's and Micah's calls are not the only instances of an association between Montserrat and the House of

and Barcelona and what is now French Cerdagne as far north as Perpignan; at the Font de la Salut near Traiguera (Castelló de la Plana), a statue of the Virgin Mary was supposedly found by miracle in a spring in 1438, and shortly after then it acquired papal and royal privileges that turned the site into a thriving centre for cures. See Christian, *Apparitions*, p. 111-12.

42. For these legends, see José Muñoz Maldonado, Conde de Fabrequer, *Historia, tradiciones y leyendas de las imágenes de la Virgen aparecidas en España*, 1 (Madrid: Impr. y Litografía de D. Juan José Martínez, 1861). eBook, digitalized on 18 June 2009 from original at the Library of Catalonia. On the Montserrat image, see pp. 69-72 and on the conflation of the Virgin's and the Gari legends, pp. 72-76. For additional examples of the Evangelist St. Luke's images of the Virgin in Spain, see pp. 37-40 for the Madrid Virgin, pp. 57, 61-62 for the Almudena Virgin's mantle painted by St. Luke, and pp. 132-33, 144-45 for the Virgin of Fuencisla, patroness of Segovia. For the essential qualities and powers of the images of the Virgin made by St. Luke, see Alarcón Román, 'Clasificación y fuentes', pp. 21-22.
43. Sylvia Schein, 'Between Mount Moriah and the Holy Sepulchre: The Changing Traditions of the Temple Mount in the Central Middle Ages', *Traditio*, 40 (1984), pp. 175-195 (p. 184). See also 'Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer', 31 (the Sacrifice of Isaac) and 35 (Jacob's Dream); this eschatological Midrash composition was written in Palestine in the eighth century, that is to say under Islamic rule.
44. Commentaries on Genesis 28 in the *Glossa Ordinaria* and other medieval works identify Bethel with the future site of the Temple, the cultic centre of ancient Israel and focal point for the activity of Jesus. See, among others, David C. Steinmetz, 'Luther and the Ascent of Jacob's Ladder', *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture*, 55 (1986), pp. 179-92 (esp. pp. 179, 183-84). DOI: 10.2307/3167419.



God on the Temple Mount made by learned abbots, monks, and pilgrims. For example, the monk Matthieu Olivier connected his abbey with the divine revelation at Bethel by asserting in his *Histoire de l'abbaye et des miracles de Notre-Dame de Mont-Serrat* (which as noted above was first published in 1617), that all pilgrims come to Montserrat 'as the House of God and the Gate of Heaven';<sup>45</sup> this is a literal quotation of Jacob's exclamation when he awoke in great awe of God, according to the biblical story of the patriarch's dream (Gen 28, 17). Therefore, our two examples, Abbot Pere de Burgos's decision to open his book on Montserrat with the verse '*Venite, ascendamus ad montem Domini, ad domum dei Jacob*', and the monk Matthieu Olivier's description of the abbey as 'the House of God and the Gate of Heaven', should be considered as no mere poetical expressions.

The conflation of the two sites, Bethel and the Temple Mount, was well-known and, what is more, was reinforced and spread in Jerusalem itself among the pilgrims who reached their longed for destination. For example, the Anglo-Saxon pilgrim Seawulf, who visited Jerusalem in 1102-1103, associated with the *Templum Domini* (the Muslim Dome of the Rock that the Crusaders christianized as the 'Temple of the Lord') a large number of biblical traditions and located in the Temple Mount the ancient Bethel, where Jacob rested and saw in his dream the ladder bridging between earth and heaven;<sup>46</sup> almost certainly, Seawulf was informed by local Christians, since as a layman he probably did not have enough knowledge to invent such traditions. Our second example evidences the long life of this same tradition, on the one hand, and its malleability in Christian thought on the other hand: about four centuries after Seawulf, the Franciscan friar Francesco Suriano, *Custos Terrae Sanctae* from 1493 to 1495 and from 1512 to 1515, located the place where Jacob saw the ladder, where the angel wrestled with him, and where he exclaimed 'This place is holy [...] It must be the House of God; it must be the gate that opens into heaven' – not in the *Templum Domini* on the Temple Mount, but on Mount Calvary.<sup>47</sup> The translation of traditions was called for: Jerusalem had been lost to the Muslims more than two and a half centuries before Francesco Suriano served in Jerusalem, and since then the *Templum Domini* had returned to its original dedication as the Dome of the Rock; not the least of all, it was inaccessible to non-Muslims.

Pilgrims who reached the Holy Sepulchre were welcome and shown to its many sacred sites by the monks serving that sanctuary, according to a more or less regular order and interpretative scheme, as evidenced by

45. Olivier, *Histoire de l'abbaye*, p. 194.

46. Schein, *Between Mount Moriah*, p. 184.

47. Idem, p. 194. Fra Suriano was the author of the popular *Il trattato di Terra Santa e dell'Oriente*, that was published in 1485 according to some sources, or as late as 1515 according to others.



repetitive accounts of pilgrimages.<sup>48</sup> The wonders they saw included the site where Jacob saw the ladder, and the site and the narratives may have been especially significant to those pilgrims who came from sacred mounts like Montserrat, that were considered a New Jerusalem and an *axis mundi* bridging like Jacob's ladder between earth and heaven. Naturally, the association of their homeland as New Jerusalem with the Holy Sepulchre, where the *ombilicus mundi* was located, would be strengthened by these narratives, and when back at home they would emotively elaborate their accounts on the marvellous things they saw and experienced. Moreover, worshippers who reached the sanctuary of Montserrat would probably hear the local monks' constructed and reconstructed descriptions of their mountain as a sacred place, the Ladder to and the Gate of Heaven like the Golgotha in Jerusalem. Most probably they would also create a symbolical association with the Virgin and the image that they came to venerate, since these were two of her metaphorical epithets. We should keep in mind that central biblical stories and local traditions were known not only to the lettered, but also to the unlettered through repetitive sermons at the church and, moreover, what we call *sensus allegoricus* was actually recognized by believers as the whole and only truth in the *sensus literalis*; sacred geography was the only real space, for it is concerned with the only indubitable reality – the sacred.<sup>49</sup>

The Montserrat Mountain and sanctuary perfectly corresponded to all descriptions of an *axis mundi*. The mountain is situated in the centre of Catalonia and its brisk rise, to a height of 1236 meters at the centre of a plain, enhances both the perception of a central location and the steepness of the cliffs, which seem to climb and reach the heavens. Therefore, Montserrat's location is that of the sacred mountain that rises at the centre of the world and as such it functions as a ladder and gate of heaven. In his paper 'The Yearning for Paradise in Primitive Tradition', Mircea Eliade notes that we encounter the Paradise myth in cultures all over the world, and that these myths may be classified into two great categories: 'first, those concerning the primordial close proximity between Heaven and Earth; and second, those referring to an actual means of communication

48. Nieves Baranda, 'El camino espiritual a Jerusalén a principios del Renacimiento', in *Medieval and Renaissance Spain and Portugal*, ed. by Arthur Lee-Francis Askins, Martha Elizabeth Schaffer, and Antonio Cortijo Ocaña (Tamesis Books, 2006), pp. 23-41 (p. 30).

49. Dorothea R. French, 'Journeys to the Center of the Earth: Medieval and Renaissance Pilgrimages to Mount Calvary', in *Journeys Towards God: Pilgrimage and Crusade*, ed. by Barbara N. Sargent-Bauer (Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1992), p. 60, based on Mircea Eliade, *Images and Symbols: Studies in Religious Symbolism*, trans. by Philip Mairet (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1969), pp. 39-40.

between these poles'.<sup>50</sup> We would say that Montserrat can be perceived as an expression of these two basic elements. As the biblical mountains, first and foremost Moriah/ the Temple Mount/ Zion, it is a mythical *axis mundi* that occupies the 'centre of the Earth and connects Earth with Heaven'.<sup>51</sup>

But there is more to Montserrat as a translation of Jerusalem in the sense of a mythical centre. The sanctuary that houses the sacred image of the Virgin is located not on one of the peaks but at an altitude of 720 meters, that is to say about midway up the mountain. Since the beginnings of the seventeenth century at the latest, this midway point was believed to have been chosen hundreds of years before by the Virgin herself, when her image would not allow the carriers to move it from there. This element strengthens even more the image of Montserrat as a reflection of the biblical Holy City: 'Look at Jerusalem. I put her at the centre of the world, with other countries all round her', says God (Ez 5, 5). The biblical concept of Jerusalem is further elaborated in the Jewish tradition as in Midrash Tanhuma (Kedoshim 10), which holds that the Land of Israel is situated in the centre of the world, Jerusalem is situated in the centre of Israel, the Temple in the centre of Jerusalem, and the Holy of Holies in the centre of the Temple.<sup>52</sup> This and similar traditions were possibly known in learned Catholic circles like the Montserrat Abbey. For example, Gregorio de Argaiz wrote in his *La Perla de Cataluña*, that the massif, a sacred and miraculous area, surrounds the monastery, which in turn surrounds the sanctuary that surrounds the miraculous image of Our Lady.<sup>53</sup> In this sense, similarly to the mountains around Jerusalem, also the Montserrat Mountain sheltered the sanctuary, which was located at the site chosen by the Virgin and perceived as the House of God in Jerusalem: the sanctuary is the centre of a centre with the Virgin as the Holy of Holies that houses the Son of God. We may draw another allegorical parallel regarding both the location of Jerusalem and Montserrat as sacred mountains and the two sanctuaries as the dwelling place of God: 'As the mountains surround Jerusalem/ so the Lord surrounds his people/ now and for ever', says Psalm 125, 2, meaning that Jerusalem is an allegorical image of the care of God for his people

50. Mircea Eliade, 'The Yearning for Paradise in Primitive Tradition', *Daedalus*, 88: 2, Myth and Mythmaking (Spring, 1959), pp. 255-267 (p. 255). E-version by the MIT Press on behalf of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences.

51. Eliade remarks that the concept of an *axis mundi* developed in pastoral and sedentary cultures and was handed to the great urban cultures of the ancient East. This would be the origin of the biblical perception of Jerusalem. See idem, p. 256. See also French, 'Journeys to the Center of the Earth', pp. 45-81, and below.

52. Sylvia Schein, *Gateway to the Heavenly City: Crusader Jerusalem and the Catholic West* (1099-1187), Church, Faith, and Culture in the Medieval West (Aldershot-Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), p. 141.

53. Preface to the book.

now and for all future time. Similarly, the tower-like steep cliffs surround the Virgin's sanctuary in Montserrat, which is located midway up the sacred mountain, and her image protects the faithful and intercedes with God on their behalf.

Lastly, we should recall that in this sense the Virgin is identified not only with the Temple but also with the Mountain of the Lord. She is like a mountain because she was chosen for the ultimate calling of bearing God in her womb. This interpretation is based on Psalm 67 [68], 17, which is read as a metaphor for Mary meaning that God dwells inside a mountain in the same way that Jesus dwelt inside the Virgin's womb. Most significant in our context, as already noted, Matthieu Olivier identified Montserrat with the Mountain of the Lord in that same Psalm – God's mountain, a rich mountain, the mountain in which God has been pleased to dwell.

'TRASLADADA EN ESSA SION, NUEVA JERUSALEN, MONTAÑA DE MONSERRATE, MONTE DE DIOS: "MONS DEI"'

As we have seen, Montserrat, like Jerusalem, is an *axis mundi*: both are perceived as cosmic mountains, the centre of a centre, and a bridge between earth and heaven. In addition, many writers compare the Montserrat cliffs and peaks to the towered walls enclosing a city built on a high mountain. Thus Abbot Pere de Burgos, the first historian of Montserrat, praised the beauty of the mountain and noted that 'in many places the steep cliffs reach such height that they recall the towers of a city set high up, and in the north face of the mountain the rocks are so rough that they look like the strong walls of a big city'.<sup>54</sup>

Nevertheless, Montserrat is not like any metaphorically walled city. In the sermon for the feast of the Virgin as patron of Montserrat on 8 September 1672, the preacher Francisco de los Ríos praised the mountain '*Trasladada en essa Sion, nueva Jerusalem, montaña de Monserrate, monte de Dios: "Mons Dei"*' – 'translated to that Zion, the New Jerusalem, mountain of Montserrat, mount of God: "Mons Dei"'.<sup>55</sup> About twenty years later, in c. 1690, the Montserrat monk Francisco de Ortega clearly pointed to the similarity between Montserrat and the New Jerusalem in his *Poema heroico*, when he described the mountain as 'the City of God of this hemisphere',<sup>56</sup> in an image that suggests the Heavenly Jerusalem in the Revelation to St. John, 21-22.

54. 'Por muchas partes se levantan unas rocas tan altas, que no parecen sino torres de alguna ciudad puesta en alto, y a la parte de la tramontana están de tal manera tajadas las peñas que parecen ser una muy fuerte cerca de alguna grande ciudad'. *Libro de la historia*, p. 1. See Roma i Casanovas, 'La construcció medial de la muntanya', pp. 334-339, with many examples of comparisons of Montserrat to a walled city.

55. Altés i Aguiló, 'La santa imatge de Montserrat', pp. 140-142.

56. 'Es la Ciudad de Dios deste Hemisferio'. *Poema heroico[:]* *Historia del origen, antigüedad, e invencion de nuestra senora [sic] de Monserrate, y descripcion de su sagrada montana*

The image of biblical Jerusalem surrounded all around by a crenellated wall could easily be applied as a metaphor to Montserrat, especially since many other biblical images had been used to draw a parallel between the Catalanian mountain and the Holy City. The valuable metaphor also was readily adopted by other religious institutions and towns in mountainous Catalonia. Indeed, as Roma i Casanovas remarks, the Mountain of Nuria, which towers upon a valley and the church dedicated there to the Virgin, was repeatedly compared to Jerusalem in this sense, and at the same time that Montserrat was reconstructing its legends and sacralizing them with close associations with Jerusalem. 'It seems that this is a representation of the Holy City of Jerusalem, of which [King] David said that was surrounded by mountains', wrote Francesc Marès in his *Historia y miracles de la sagrada imatge de nostra Senyora de Núria*, first published in 1666.<sup>57</sup> To complete the picture of his homeland, Francesc Marès also described the Mountain of Nuria as a real paradise on earth.<sup>58</sup> This last parallel, but between Paradise and Montserrat, had already been drawn in 1587 by the poet Cristoval de Virués in his *El Monserrate*.<sup>59</sup> The verses in Isaiah 51, 3, comparing Jerusalem to Paradise, lyrically explain the double association:

I will show compassion to Jerusalem,  
to all who live in her ruins.  
Though her land is a desert, **I will make it a garden,**  
**like the garden I planted in Eden.**  
Joy and gladness will be there,  
and songs of praise and thanks to me.

In view of the laudatory character of the literature on sanctuaries and the holy as a whole, and the tendency to elaborate on metaphors, the parallels

[sic], y heremitorio, (Amberes (?), 1690 (?)), p. 98. Kept at the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, signature R 5380. Quoted by Roma i Casanovas, 'La construcció medial de la muntanya', pp. 337-38.

57. 'apar, que sia una representació de la santa Ciutat de Hyerusalem, de la qual diu David, que estava circuída de Montanyas'. We quote the 1700 edition published in Barcelona by the editorial Estampa de Antoni Lacavalleria, page 4.
58. Francesc Marès' complete argument reads: 'La amenitat, gentilesa, y hermosura de aquellas Montañas de Nuria apenas pot declararse ab la ploma; porque no pot dirse ab ella lo que apenas podrán distinguir, ni especificar ab la vista los qui las veuhen; sols com ha admirats de las perfectas obras de naturalesa, dihuen, que se es esmerada ella per glorias de Maria Santissima en esmaltar la terra ab florestas de tan varios, y diferents colors, de tanta suavitat, y gentilesa, que **forman un viu retrato del Paradís Terrenal**' [our emphasis]. Marès, *Historia y miracles*, p. 12, quoted and interpreted by Roma i Casanovas, 'La construcció medial de la muntanya', pp. 313, 344.
59. *El Monserrate del Capitán Cristoval de Virués*. The first edition of *El Monserrate*, which was published in Madrid, was reedited in Milan in 1602 and enlarged in 1609. See, for example, Canto V, Canto XII y Canto XX. <http://www.archive.org/details/elmonserattedel00virugoog>. See also Roma i Casanovas, 'La construcció medial de la muntanya', p. 341.

between Catalanian sacred mountains and Jerusalem, or between them and Paradise may have been clear and significative to the faithful. Therefore, metaphors such as those created by the poet Cristoval de Virués when calling Montserrat a Paradise, and by Francisco de los Ríos when calling it a New Jerusalem, could most probably be repeated and spread also by the monks who tended to the *romeros* and pilgrims that arrived to the sacred mountain.

'THE EARTH SHOOK, THE ROCKS SPLIT APART' (Mt 27, 51): MONTSERRAT GRIEVES

The verticality of the outlines of the Montserrat Mountain naturally arouses the imagination of those who see this conglomerate of cliffs. The exceptional shapes have been compared to a walled city, gigantic fingers, the tubes of an organ, and as the etymology of the massif's name conveys – a serrated mountain. As we noted, the sudden rise of the cliffs emphasizes the impression that the peaks are reaching for the heavens, a symbolism related to mythical cosmic perceptions that inspired many legends in the attempt to explain the origins of singular mountains.

Two legends on the origin of the fantastic shape stand out. One legend tells that the Child Jesus serrated the mountain to help the faithful climb up the cliffs and reach the sanctuary and the hermitages. The image of the Child sitting on his Mother's lap and sawing the peaks is paradigmatic of medals, illustrations in books, and stamps in the fifteenth and sixteenth century.<sup>60</sup> The other legend explains the mountain's configuration as a result of its emotive reaction to the death of Jesus on the cross: Montserrat split apart like the Golgotha Hill and a few selected sacred mountains. This legend prevails in written sources. As noted above, the symbolical association of Montserrat with the Golgotha appeared much earlier, as evidenced by the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* of Alfons X which were compiled between the 1270s and 1284. The Cantiga number 113 tells 'How Holy Mary of Montserrat protected the monastery so that the stone which fell from the cliff would not strike it', because **'I [Alfons the Wise] think it right and proper that stones obey the Mother of the King, because when He died for us, I know that they split asunder'** [our emphasis].<sup>61</sup> The illustration of the miracle in the 'Manuscrito rico' (Fig. 2), the most lavishly illuminated of the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* manuscripts (Escorial, MS T.I.1 (EI)), is identified by a caption quoting Alfons's words in the title of that story: '*Por rason tenno d'obedecer as pedras à Madre do Rei, que quando morreu por nos sei que porend se foron fender*'. This is the earliest known reference to the

60. Alarcón, 'Las ilustraciones marianas', p. 174. A less popular version of this legend says that angels sawed the mountain; it is noted by Gaspar Barreiros (1546) and Barthélemy Joly (1603). See Fernández Terricabras, 'La Vierge et les montagnes', p. 195.

61. Keller, 'Montserrat in the "Cantigas"', pp. 211-14.

mountain's grief at the moment of the death of Jesus as the reason for its unique cliffy shape. Regarding the interpretation of the image in the 'Manuscrito rico', we should note that whereas the personal style of a painter was not a parameter in the iconographic reading, a certain shape and colour were perceived as iconographic signifiers. Therefore, the description of the Golgotha and the Montserrat Mountain by means of the same pictorial elements, more so in the same illustration, played an iconographical role and reinforced the identity between the two mountains that was also conveyed by the captions and the story as a whole.

However, the exegesis that the Montserrat Mountain's cracked outlines are the result of its deep grief at the moment of the death of Jesus on the cross became widely accepted as a historical truth only by 1677, the year when Gregorio de Argaiz published his *La Perla de Cataluña*. 'When Matthew said that "the earth shook, the rocks split apart"' [27, 51], asks Argaiz, 'could it be that he referred only to those stones located nearby the Golgotha Mount?' As our Father St. Gregory explains, continues Argaiz, at that moment the walls of the buildings fell down, or cracked, or split apart, and the same happened to the strongest and most resisting rocks. The author then quotes the learned arguments of Hauberto [Hispalense] and Liberato [Gerundense] each in his own *Chronicon*,<sup>62</sup> and points to the Promontory of Gaeta in the Campania; Alverna in Toscana (there St. Francis received the *stigmata*); Mount Raynerio in Italy, and the Peña de San Miguel de Faix which similarly split apart. Nevertheless, he clarifies, it was Montserrat that grieved the most and its great sadness was especially appreciated by God. Therefore, although this mountain – which was created as a perfect massif of the hardest rock, with no traces of valleys, divisions or trees –

**split and lost its original shape at the moment of the death of Jesus, it did not become deteriorated; on the contrary, its form was improved and it seemed that it had died ugly to resuscitate beautiful, as if the Eternal Father had wished to cover its nakedness with rich garments in appreciation of the great suffering it experienced at the death of his Son [our emphasis].**

62. Argaiz, *La Perla de Cataluña*, pp. 2-3. Not only Hauberto Hispalense's *Chronicon* was a seventeenth-century fake. Also Liberato Gerundense's was. The latter was written by Juan Gaspar Roig i Jalpí, and the false *Chronicon* was dated to 546. We should note that although doubts regarding the authenticity of these and other works arose soon after they were published, Argaiz considered them trustworthy and included them in his *Poblacion eclesiastica de España y noticia de sus primeras honras: continuada en los escritos, y Chronicon de Hauberto, monge de San Benito* (Madrid: Imprenta Real, 1668), and *Poblacion eclesiastica de España y noticia de sus primeras honras ...: continuada en los escritos de Marco Maximo Obispo de Zaragoza y defendidos de la vulgar embidia el Beroso Aniano, Flavio Lucio Dextro, Auberto Hispalense, y Vualabonso: con el cronicon de Liberato Abad, no impresso antes ...* (Madrid: Gabriel de León, 1669). See digitalized editions by the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2010 and 2009 respectively.



Thus, elaborates Argaiz, if in its first condition the Montserrat Mountain had looked so rough that it was considered difficult even for ferocious animals to inhabit it, now its rocks are made of jasper and with almost no effort the semi-precious stones can be perceived.<sup>63</sup> Possibly, this story of rough rocks turning into semi-precious stones could recall another well-known biblical verse that was often quoted in sermons and the liturgy: Ezekiel, in the prophecy on the Judgment of the Nations (28, 13-14), expressing God's teachings: 'You lived in Eden, the garden of God [...] You lived on my holy mountain and walked among sparkling gems'; such association would equal the structure that Montserrat acquired after the crucifixion with that of Paradise.

The influential *Compendio historial, o relación breve y veridical del portentoso santuario y cámara angelical de Nuestra Señora de Montserrat, dirigido a los piadosos devotos afectos de aquella Persona, que desean verle, y no se les proporciona la fortuna de conseguirlo*, which was published in Barcelona in the year 1758 by an anonymous author who has been identified as the Abbot of Montserrat Benet Argeric,<sup>64</sup> adds two emotive dimensions to the interpretation of the shape of Montserrat. Benet Argeric follows Gregorio de Argaiz's explanation based on the symbolical association to the Golgotha in Jerusalem, in a highly emotional and personal call to greater devotion. The Abbot affirms that like the Golgotha, this mountain split asunder at the death of Jesus and moreover, in a local patriotic tone, he adds that Montserrat differs from all the mountains that have tried to imitate it in that:

Whereas the other mounts cause horror and frighten those who look at them, this [mountain] instils solace and a special joy to those who arrive to see it even if from afar and discover it with their eyes; it seems as if the Creator wished to honour and singularize these crags and rocks because of the tenderness that they so manifestly expressed at the moment of the death of our Redeemer, when their natural inert bowels broke, and their sacred peaks trembled as if they grieved the cruel death of their Author.<sup>65</sup>

63. We transcribe here part of the author's long explanation, which appears in his *La Perla de Cataluña*, p. 3: 'Quedò el cuerpo deste monte peregrino, y estraño por extremo, diferente del rostro q'antes tenia; pero no deteriorado, sino mejorado mucho, y fue como morir feo, para resucitar hermoso; q' parece quiso el Padre Eterno vestir sus desnudezes en premio al sentimiento que mostrò en la muerte de su Hijo, con sobrepuestas galas q' no tuvo, ni le dieron en su primera condicion; porque si antes a los q' le miravan se mostrava tan aspero, que aun habitarlo los animales fieros se juzgava por dificultoso [...] assi aora examinada la calidad de las peñas se halla q' son jaspes, y q' con poco cuidado se topa con lo fino'.

64. Barcelona: Juan Jolis.

65. 'quando los demàs montes causan horror, y espanto à quien los mira, èste infunde un particular consuelo, y una especial alegría à quien llega aunque de muy lejos a descubrirle con la vista [...] parece que quiso el Criador de todo honrar, y singularizar à estos riscos, y peñascos, por la ternura que tan patentemente manifestaron en la muerte de nuestro Redemptor, rompiendose sus naturales insensibles entrañas, y estremenciendose sus promontorios sacros, como que se dolian de la cruel muerte de su Autor'. See p. 2.



Pain turns into joy because of the sacredness of the event that took place in Montserrat as in Jerusalem.

The religious interpretation of the special shape of Montserrat that associates it with the Golgotha rapidly spread as true and trustworthy, although other etymologies of the mountain's name continued to appear at its side. Moreover, additional sources were invented to prove the truth of the Montserrat - Golgotha equation. We will refer to a construct that was frequently quoted as historical evidence, as in the *Epistome histórico del portentoso santuario y Real Monasterio de Nuestra Señora de Montserrat*, written by the historian Pere Serra y Postius and partly published in 1742.<sup>66</sup> Serra y Postius presents a prestigious source whose authority would be hard to challenge: St. Cyril, Father of the Church and Bishop of Jerusalem (for various periods between c. 350 and 386), in his *Catechesis* 13:

*'Id quod hactenus Golgotha monstrat, ubi propter Christum petrae scissae sunt, nec non ex traditione Mons Albernae in Etruria, in Campania Promontorium ad littus Caieta, et in "Tarraconensi Hispania Montserratus"'* [our emphasis].<sup>67</sup>

Serra y Pontius admits that he did not consult the works of St. Cyril, and to mend this fault in a 'scholarly' manner, he proceeds to name a long list of major experts who verify the contents of that *Catechesis*.<sup>68</sup>

Also interesting in this respect is the account by Cayetano Cornet y Mas (Gaietà Cornet i Mas) in his *Tres días en Montserrat. Guía historico-descriptiva de todo lo que contiene y encierra esta montaña*, first published in Barcelona in 1858.<sup>69</sup> The work of Cornet y Mas introduces elements that mirror a rapidly changing perception of reality against the background of the technological, industrial and socio-political revolutions taking place in the mid-nineteenth century. After a detailed description of the mountain in scientific terms (actually seasoned with many metaphors), and an elaborate geological analysis of the rocks, Cornet y Mas presents a long list of authors who explain the configuration of the mountain as the result of its deep grief at the moment of the death of Christ. At some point in his discussion also Cornet y Mas quotes St. Cyril's *Catechesis*, haec. 13, in the very same words that Serra y Postius used. Contrastingly, or perhaps apologetically in light

66. Barcelona: Joseph Giralt.

67. 'That which has hitherto been shown by the Golgotha, where the splits in the rocks still exist as a sign of the love for Christ, according to tradition [can be seen] also in Mount Alverna in Etruria, Campania, and in Cape Gaeta on the shore, and in the "Tarraconensi Hispania Montserratus"'. Serra y Postius, esp. pp. 55-56.

68. Idem, pp. 56-60.

69. We consulted the second edition, published in Barcelona by the Librería del Plus Ultra in 1863.

of the many controversies between the Church and scientific circles at the time, Cornet y Mas adds: 'This is what Argaiz said'.<sup>70</sup>

We notice in these examples two relevant phenomena in the context of the development of the legend of Montserrat as a translation of Jerusalem. One phenomenon is the importance given by these authors to the ancient Jerusalemite source, Bishop St. Cyril of Jerusalem of all Fathers of the Church, as most trustworthy. As well remembered, Argaiz mentioned later personalities as his direct sources: St. Gregory, Hauberto Hispalense, and Liberato Gerundense. Evidently, Cyril of Jerusalem's words were perceived as much more authoritative both because of his status as Bishop of Jerusalem, the site of this central religious event, and because he was closer in time. It would not have been too difficult to prove that no such story appears in Cyril's Catechesis,<sup>71</sup> but possibly only counted readers would doubt a quote of an ancient and prestigious Jerusalemite source. A parallel development we may note in the development of the legend of the Montserrat image of the Virgin: at first the origins of the image were not known, as Abbot Pere de Burgos stated, but at a certain point in time it was clear that the image had been created in Jerusalem by St. Luke, who personally knew the Virgin, as Argaiz wrote; historians of the monastery also specified that it was brought to Spain by St. Peter and, last but not the least, all these historical events were repeatedly confirmed by trustworthy ecclesiastics.

The other relevant phenomenon, in the context of the development of the legend of Montserrat as a translation of Jerusalem, is the role of the legend equating Montserrat and the Golgotha in the religious, political, and cultural discourse. For example, nine years after Cornet y Mas, who chose not to give his own opinion regarding the origins of the mountain's shape, Miguel Muntadas i Romaní, abbot of Montserrat in the years 1858-1885, published his own history book, titled *Montserrat: su pasado, su presente y su porvenir, ó, lo que fué hasta su destruccion el año 1811, lo que es desde su destruccion y lo que será en adelante. Historia compuesta en vista de los documentos existentes en el archivo del monasterio, por el abad el M. Iltre. Sr. D. Miguel Muntadas*.<sup>72</sup> The last part of the long title called our attention:

70. Idem, pp. 20, 21. The history of Pere Serra y Postius's book also reflects the political crisis in Catalunya at the time. His refusal to include the portraits of Kings Felipe V and Luis I in a gallery of portraits of the Counts of Barcelona, resulted in a court order forbidding to print the second volumen; this was published in the 1747 edition of the book, which omitted all the portraits. See José Luis Betrán, Antonio Espino and Lluís Ferran Toledano, 'Pere Serra i Postius y el criticismo historiográfico en la Barcelona de la primera mitad del siglo XVIII', *Manuscripts*, 10 (January 1992), pp. 315-29 (p. 319).

71. The source of this rewriting of Cyril's work may have been the special focus of this Catechesis on the Crucifixion and burial of Jesus Christ.

72. Manresa: Imprenta de Pablo Roca, in charge of Luis Roca, 1867, eBook, digitalized 30 October 2009.

*'Historia compuesta en vista de los documentos existentes en el archivo del monasterio'* – 'History compiled from **the documents kept at the monastery's** archive' [our emphasis]. Contrarily to Cornet y Mas, both the wish to present a scientific work and the apologetic approach are very clear; one example, in our context, is the use of the equation Montserrat – Golgotha, which is called upon to invalidate secular points of view without rejecting the importance of science. Abbot Muntadas dedicates, as usual, a first and detailed chapter to the history and description of the mountain. He mentions the many names given to Montserrat along its history and notes that '**the original name, "Mont-estorcil, quasi tortus"**', means '**a great pain**' and was given to Montserrat '**at the time of the Redeptor's work**' [our emphasis].<sup>73</sup> Next, like Cornet y Mas, Abbot Muntadas scholarly resumes the scientific theories on the unique configuration of the mountain and writes that there is no need to contradict the theories, or science, or history. However, he remarks, in view of the many deficiencies of those theories, 'would it be possible to doubt that the supernatural and awesome prodigies at the Golgotha affected also this inexplicable Mountain, as proclaimed by a pious and learned tradition, and as the heart with pleasure believes?'<sup>74</sup> Muntadas consequently ends his second chapter with a call: '**We must confess it frankly and openly: Montserrat grieved the deicide, and its pain caused the rocks to crack**' [our emphasis].<sup>75</sup>

Lastly, to reach the end of the century and a period of intensive secularization, we will quote Francesc de Paula Crusellas, monk of Montserrat, who published his book on the history of his monastery in 1896. As other writers before him, also Crusellas explained the exceptional outlines of the Montserrat Mountain by equating it with the Golgotha in Jerusalem at the time Jesus died on the cross. The author then praised the great beauty of Montserrat, which distinguishes it from all mountains in the world (by then a national, not only a religious topos) because it was a gift of God. In other words, Crusellas brought forth the theme of Benet Argeric's *Compendio*, which as just noted was published in 1758, that is to say at a very different socio-political, cultural, and religious period; therefore, Crusellas evidences the strength and the malleability of the religious morphological exegesis. The author wrote:

Whereas other mountains frighten, this mountain not only comforts and causes spiritual joy, but also calls to contemplation of the celestial world. It seems that with this glorious heraldic standard the Creator wished to

73. Idem, pp. 10-12.

74. 'Será posible dudar que los sobrenaturales y aterradores prodigios del Gólgota se sintieron en esta inesplicable Montaña, como así lo proclama una tradicion tan piadosa, como ilustrada, y como así se complace en creerlo el corazón?'. Idem, p. 18.

75. 'Confesemoslo franca y abiertamente: Montserrat ha llorado el deicidio; y su dolor ha partido sus rocas'. Idem.

honour and singularize these cliffs and peaks, in reward for the tenderness that they manifested at the moment of the death of the Divine Redemptor by splitting apart in grief over the death of their Author. In Montserrat, the words of St. Matthew the Evangelist [27, 51] were verified: *'Et terra mota est, et petrae scissae sunt'*.<sup>76</sup>

The literature on the history of Montserrat is extensive and rich in legends and metaphors that enhance its sacredness and also explain its unique landscape as connected with God in a special way and, therefore, worthy of reverence. It is quite possible that the predominance of the legend that equates Montserrat with the Golgotha in accounts of the history of the devotional complex, poems, and songs that praise it, is related to the development of pious practices such as the *imitatio Christi*, especially his Passion. The roots of this cultural approach, known as *devotio moderna*, reach back to the fourteenth century, and its practice was much advanced in Spain in the late fifteenth by the influential Garcias de Cisneros, abbot of Montserrat in the years 1499-1510.<sup>77</sup> The *devotio moderna* called for an emotive inner identification with the suffering of Jesus by methodical meditation and prayer, and advanced the performance of a painstaking mental *via crucis* that would bring the same spiritual benefits of a real performance in Jerusalem.

Another source may have been the legends of St. Francis of Assisi. The story of the *stigmata* of St. Francis, explaining that it precisely happened on Mount Alverna because it cracked at the moment of the death of Jesus, appeared in the *Fioretti di San Francesco*, a text probably written between 1370 and 1390 that by the year 1500 had reached many editions in Italian and other languages,<sup>78</sup> significantly, an anonymous text in vernacular Spanish that may be a version of the *Fioretti* appeared in Spain in 1492. According to Miguel Ángel Vega Cernuda this date suggests that Garcias de Cisneros may have been involved in its edition and diffusion.<sup>79</sup> We should

76. 'Mientras las demás montañas suelen infundir pavor, ésta no solo causa consuelo y espiritual alegría, sino que convida á la contemplación de las cosas celestiales. Con este blasón glorioso parece que quiso el Creador del mundo honrar y singularizar estos riscos y peñascos por la ternura que tan patentemente manifestaron en la muerte del Redentor Divino, rompiéndose sus insensibles entrañas como si se doliesen de la muerte de su Autor. En Montserrat, las palabras de San Mateo el Evangelista (27, 51) fueron verificadas: "*Et terra mota est, et petrae scissae sunt*". Crusellas, *Nueva historia del santuario*, pp. 15-16.

77. Santiago Cantera Montenegro, 'Opus Dei y Devotio Moderna: El Directorio de las Horas Canónicas de García Jiménez de Cisneros, O.S.B.', *Studies in Spirituality*, 16 (2006), pp. 165-80. DOI: 10.2143/SIS.16.0.2017797. See also below.

78. *I Fioretti di San Francesco* is not an original work but a compilation of anonymous works, probably based on a translation to vernacular Italian of the *Actus beati Francisce et sociorum eius* which is attributed to Ugolino da Montegiorgio c. 1320-1340.

79. Miguel Ángel Vega Cernuda, 'Reflexiones críticas sobre la traducción al español de las fuentes franciscanas con especial referencia a "Las Florecillas"', in *Los franciscanos hispanos por los*

note another relevant parallel between Montserrat and Assisi: the indulgence of the Porziuncula, granted by Boniface IX in 1397 to the pilgrims to Montserrat after the model of Assisi (*Portiunculae sacra aedes*);<sup>80</sup> no doubt, this privilege further increased the prestige of the Catalan monastery. In addition, relations between the two centres of devotion found expression in the rituals performed in the Montserrat sanctuary and in the development of legendary traditions.

In any case, we may suppose that the symbolism of the other popular legend on the origins of the shape of the Montserrat mountain, telling that the cliffs were serrated by the child Jesus to assist the faithful in reaching the sanctuary, would have certainly been less impressive and meaningful than that of a mountain that split apart at the sacrificial death of the adult Son of God. The equation of Montserrat with the Golgotha would better correspond to the philosophical and theological concepts of the late Middle Ages, the *devotio moderna's* ideal of an inner identification with Jesus, or *imitatio Christi*, as in the performance of a mental *via crucis* or Mary's path of Sorrows. We shall elaborate on this topic below.

#### WITH THE VIRGIN IN HER JOYS AND SORROWS: THE WAY TO MONTSERRAT

Three main ways led the pilgrims to Montserrat: the way of the coast through Collbató, the way that passed below the Roca Foradada, and the way from Monistrol. The three took advantage of natural passes, many of them improved by quarrying the rocks.<sup>81</sup> The way from Collbató was the most frequented: it was the preferred by pilgrims and visitors who travelled through Barcelona and those who took part in the yearly cultic processions to the sanctuary from villages and towns in the surrounding areas – the Low Llobregat, Penedès, and part of Anoia. This way also was the most frequently described and represented.

The way from Collbató also was the choice of King Pere the Ceremonious of the Crown of Aragon (1336-1387), who like his predecessors was a fervent devotee of the Mare de Déu de Montserrat and visited her five times between the years 1339 and 1366. The King also was a protector of the

*caminos de la traducción: textos y contextos*, ed. by Antonio Bueno García and Miguel Ángel Vega Cernuda (Edición precongresual), (Soria: Diputación Provincial de Soria, 2011), pp. 9-35 (pp. 24, 26).

<http://www.traduccion-franciscanos.uva.es/precong/pdf/Edicion%20precongresual.pdf>

80. See Josep de C. Laplana, *Montserrat, mil anys d'art i història* (Manresa, Fundació Caixa Manresa: Angle, 1998), p. 53.

81. Assumpta Muset i Pons and Miquel Vives Tort, 'Els camins romeus de Montserrat (segle XI – 1850)', pp. 58-60, note 102, and Assumpta Muset i Pons with Joan Yeguas, 'Les creus del camí de Collbató a Montserrat (segles XIV-XIX)', n.p. Both studies were written in 2010 and are to be published. I am most grateful to the authors for allowing me to consult their research, and will bring here only their general conclusions; the arguments and sources will be published by them.

Benedictine community and its monastery, and it was his initiative to install seven stone crosses on that way. The seven crosses were sculpted and decorated in 1366 by Pere Moragues, a famous artist from Barcelona who enjoyed the confidence of the King; two other artists carved the columns that supported the crosses and painted them, and these were probably installed in 1372. Assumpta Muset i Pons, Miquel Vives Tort, and Joan Yeguas, the three researchers who studied this topic in all its aspects in 2010, agree with Xavier Altés i Aguiló's opinion that the scenes depicted on the now lost stone crosses were the Seven Joys and Seven Sorrows of the Virgin,<sup>82</sup> and add that one cycle may have been represented on the obverse of the crosses and the other on the reverse.<sup>83</sup> This is also the case in the sanctuaries of Our Lady of Grace and of Montesión, both of them located in Mallorca, where the seven-cross paths presented one cycle on the side of the crosses facing the worshippers going up to the sanctuary and the other cycle on the side facing those going down. According to Concepción Alarcón Román, who studied the marian illustrations of the legend of Montserrat, this possibility becomes more plausible since there is a certain correspondence between the scenes depicted in Montesión of Mallorca and the *Llibre Vermell de Montserrat*.<sup>84</sup>

At the beginnings of the sixteenth century, simple chapels were constructed to enhance and protect the crosses.<sup>85</sup> Claude Bronseval, secretary of the Abbot of Clairvaux Edme de Salieu and his close companion on his journey through Spain and Portugal in 1532, described in his chronicle the difficult path marked by seven crosses and the small but aptly dressed stone chapels that sheltered them.<sup>86</sup> Obviously, these new constructions could also offer the pilgrims refuge and a private and peaceful place to make a pause and meditate on the events described on the crosses. Meditation exercised in front of each scene would help the faithful to reach a mental and emotional state of identification with Jesus and his Mother.

82. *Llibre Vermell de Montserrat (ms. 1): Edición facsímil*, p. 10. I thank Father Altés i Aguiló for kindly discussing this subject with me in the Montserrat Library in April 2011. Muset i Pons and Vives Tort, 'El camins romeus', pp. 67-68, as well as Muset i Pons and Yeguas, 'Les creus del camí', n.p., quote a document saying 'xiiij. istories en [les] .viij. pedres que de manament del dit senyor [Pere III] deuen ésser posades en certs lochs de les roques de Madona sancta Maria'.

83. Muset i Pons and Vives Tort, 'El camins romeus', p. 67, and Muset i Pons and Yeguas, 'Les creus del camí', n.p., following José García Mercadal, *Viajes de extranjeros por España y Portugal*, 3 vols (Madrid: Aguilar, 1952-1962), vol. 1, p. 1032.

84. Alarcón Román, 'Las ilustraciones marianas', p. 179.

85. Muset i Pons and Vives Tort, 'El camins romeus', pp. 68-69, note 135, based both on archaeological findings, descriptions by visitors, and visual images.

86. *Peregrinatio hispanica. Voyage de Dom Edme de Saulieu, abbé de Clairvaux, en Espagne et au Portugal, 1531-1533*, intr., trans. and notes by Dom Maur Cocheril, 2 vols (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1970), I, pp. 153-55 (for this description in Catalan, see Muset i Pons and Vives Tort, 'El camins romeus', pp. 69-70).



Believers would imagine themselves in another place and time: Jerusalem at the time the Virgin lived her mortal life and daily prayed at the holy sites of the Via Dolorosa. These versions of the via crucis served both the *devotio moderna* as a personal meditation in solitude in accordance with the mysticism characteristic of the sixteenth- and seventeenth- centuries' elite, and the communal practice as a very dramatic public ritual more apt to attract the lower classes.

The idea of 'bringing' Jerusalem to Europe in the form of devotional complexes had already appeared in the early fifteenth century. Various methods developed in the following centuries, through which a sacred place was evoked, recreated, and reused in disparate contexts, engendering sanctity in new locations and forging networks of power. The earliest symbolical translation of Jerusalem may have been created precisely in Spain. This was a devotional path that pertained to the Monastery of Scalaceli (also *Scala coeli*, or *Escalaceli*) on the Sierra Morena nearby Cordoba; his founder, Beato Álvaro de Córdoba (d. 1430), who went in pilgrimage to the Holy Land around the year 1405 and stayed there for three years, decided to recreate Jerusalem in his homeland in order to facilitate the meditation on the Passion of Jesus. The landscape of the Sierra Morena recalled to Álvaro de Córdoba the sacred landscape of Jerusalem, its topography, its vegetation and its clear light; therefore, in 1423 he built there a monastery and established a via crucis on a path that climbed from his cell to a hill that rose at about the same distance that he measured from the city of Jerusalem to the site of the crucifixion. Álvaro de Córdoba called this hill Calvary, and the surrounding mounts and valleys – Garden of Gethsemane, Mount of Olives, Cedron River and Mount Tabor.<sup>87</sup> He would nightly walk on his knees all the way up to the three crosses rising on Mount Calvary, praying and meditating in the caves and small chapels along the path, and practicing severe penances.

However, as well-known, the translations of Jerusalem gained greater significance and diffusion in Catholic Europe only after the Council of Trent (1545–1563). Not by mere chance, at about the same time the symbolical parallels between Montserrat and Jerusalem were being established. Most important in our context, according to the Dominican friar Juan de Ribas, in his *Vida y milagros del B. Fray Alvaro de Córdoba, del Orden de Predicadores*, which was published in Cordoba in 1687 – that is to say only ten years after Gregorio de Argaiz spread the legend associating the configuration of Montserrat with the Golgotha – the devotional path at the Monastery of Montserrat was signalled as a central and basic source of inspiration to the Via crucis at the Monastery of Scalaceli; this via crucis must have been later than the path of cells and crosses that Beato Alvaro established around the years 1423–1425. Juan de Ribas points to this conceptual relation

87. See Bonet Correa, 'Sacromontes y calvarios en España', pp. 174–213 (pp. 178–79).



independently of the actual chronology of the devotional path at Scalaceli. According to the author,

Friar Saint Alvaro had decided to establish his convent **in a site that closely resembled or recalled the City of Jerusalem and the other holy places** that, as already mentioned, he had visited; and having chosen the appropriate site, **in the same manner that in the Sacred Monastery of Montserrat** there are various hermitages, **he built in the Monastery of Scala coeli various oratories and rooms that represented and brought to memory the holy places of Jerusalem** [our emphasis].<sup>88</sup>

The thematic nucleus of these devotional substitutes of the Holy City was usually formed by the *via crucis* which ends with the crucifixion and death of Jesus on the Golgotha, or by scenes from the Joys and Sorrows of the Virgin, which we shall examine in relation to Montserrat. These and other processional rituals, that derived from the Passion of Jesus, developed in different parts of Europe and influenced the invention and elaboration of the stations of the *Via Dolorosa* in Jerusalem;<sup>89</sup> yet this was a reciprocal process, because the general pattern of reproduction of Jerusalem and the Holy Land within the church, churchyard, city, or village whether full-scale or reduced, was in turn fed by pilgrimage to Jerusalem. In effect, most patrons of translations of Jerusalem, like Beato Alvaro, claim to a direct recreation of the Holy City after a pilgrimage; however, as evidenced by Juan de Ribas's account, translations could also be mediated by other European replicas of the *loca sancta*.<sup>90</sup> Whether enacted in concrete space

88. '*Tenía determinado San Alvaro fabricar su convento en sitio que imitase o se pareciese a la Ciudad de Jerusalén y los demás lugares santos que, como queda dicho, avía visitado, y hecha elección del lugar referido para el convento, del modo que en el Sagrado Monasterio de Montserrat ay varias ermitas, dispuso en el Convento de Scala coeli varios Oratorios y estancias que representase y trajesen a la memoria los lugares santos de Jerusalén*'. Juan de Ribas, *Vida y Milagros del B. Fray Álvaro*, p. 144.

89. These themes could be extended by the interpolation of other remarkable events in the life of Jesus and the Virgin, as well as the lives of saints. The cultic practices that developed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries included also related devotions such as the Seven Falls of Christ and the Rosary of the Virgin, in real and virtual pilgrimages to Jerusalem. See, among others, Sandro Sticca, 'The *via crucis*: Its Historical, Spiritual and Devotional Context', *Mediaevalia*, 15 (1993), pp. 93-125, and Mitzi Kirkland-Ives, 'Alternative Routes: Variation in Early Modern Stational Devotions', *Viator*, 40: 1 (2009), pp. 249-70.

90. This was a legitimate means of translation. To keep to the Iberian Peninsula, we will note the case of the administrator of the Sanctuary of Las Ermitas (O Bolo, Ourense), D. Domingo José Rodríguez Blanco, who in 1730 decided to establish a *via crucis* like 'those built by San Carlos Borromeo in his archbishopric of Milan, or those found in many sanctuaries in Portugal, especially the *via crucis* built by D. Rodrigo de Moura Teles, Archbishop of Braga [... therefore] he went [to Braga] and carefully took the measures between the stations', and immediately after he returned – he began the construction. See Manuel Contreras, *Historia del célebre Santuario de Nuestra Señora de las Hermitas, situado en las montañas que baña el río Bibey en tierra del Bollo, Reyno de Galicia y Obispado de Astorga, corregida y aumentada y mandada estampar de orden del Ilustrísimo Señor Don Francisco Isidoro Gutierrez Vigil, del Consejo de S. M. y Obispo de Astorga* (Salamanca: Francisco de Toxar, 1798 (first ed. 1736)), pp. 58-84.

(with or without the aid of external devices such as sculptural installations), or simply imaginatively (at times with the aid of a guiding text or set of printed images), these practices structured their own performance, leading the user through an orderly and systematic contemplation of the sacred narratives.

Montserrat and Scalaceli are paradigmatic of the multilayered conception and function of the devotional New Jerusalems that proliferated after the Council of Trent. They are based on a conceptual rapport and a symbolical rather than a physical similarity, and were extended by the interpolation of other remarkable events in the life of Jesus and the Virgin, as well as the lives of saints. Our last example is one of the earliest sacred mounts in Spain, and combined features of *devotio moderna* from different sources with the Counter-Reformation ideology: Monte Celia in Guadalajara, which was built by the Prince-Friar Pedro González de Mendoza at the beginnings of the seventeenth century. According to a legend dated c. 1236, a miraculous image of the Virgin had been found at that site. Most significantly in our context, in his *Historia del Monte Celia de Nuestra Señora de La Salceda* (Granada, 1616), the founder notices the many reasons to erect a sacromonte at La Salceda. For example, he praises the Knights of St. John's deeds in the Holy Places and in the conquest of Jerusalem, and tells that the knights later chose to settle in the lands of La Alcarria because they recalled those of the Orient.<sup>91</sup> Friar Pedro points to the similarity between the landscapes of the Castle of Zorita and the Mount of Olives; a mount between Alcocer and Pareja that houses the monastery of Monsalud, and Mount Carmel; the mount between Cifuentes y Trillo that houses the monastery of Our Lady of Oliva, and Mount Sinai; Mount Altamira at la Bujeda, and Mount Thabor, and lastly, writes Gonzalez de Mendoza, especially stands out the resemblance between Mount Celia, the most important of all the Alcarria and the site the sanctuary of Our Lady of La Salceda, and Mount Zion – the oldest emplacement in Jerusalem, where Solomon built the Temple of God.<sup>92</sup> The Mount Celia complex was centred on the miraculous image of the Virgin and the Passion of Christ, but included scenes from Jesus's childhood and hermitages dedicated to various saints. The hermitage of the Calvary with the Tomb below it, and that of the Descent from the Cross were located in the 'Camino de la Amargura' (Path of Grief); the hermitage of the Descent housed the Fifth Sorrow of the Virgin – the Mother holding his dead Son, an isolated *Pietà*.

The reliance on the figure of the suffering Virgin to arouse the emotions of the worshipper is most evident in those religious movements and literary

91. Chapter 9, esp. pp. 55-56, 61-63.

92. Idem, Chapter 4, pp. 19-22. See also Pedro José Pradillo Esteban, *Via Crucis, Calvarios y Sacromontes: Arte y Religiosidad Popular en la Contrarreforma (Guadalajara, un caso excepcional)*, (Guadalajara: Diputación Provincial de Guadalajara, D.L. 1996), esp. pp. 245-83 for a detailed description and iconographic study of La Salceda.

forms that fostered the new, affective veneration of Christ's Passion. One can trace the increasing prominence of the Virgin in empathetic Passion meditation as these devotions moved from monasteries in the twelfth century, to the popularizing religiosity of the Franciscans and the Dominicans in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and subsequently to lay communities as well. The path of the Joys and Sorrows of the Virgin, in the way from Collbató to Montserrat, was an expression of this popular devotion. Probably, those who went to venerate the Virgin and ask for her intercession at her sanctuary, prepared themselves spiritually and emotionally by meditating and praying in front of each of the seven crosses.

Through repetitive cultic acts of devotion, the religious events become an integral part of the identity of the site, detached from historical time; events and site acquire a timeless, ever-present magical character. Thus, the many symbolical references to Jerusalem in the interpretations of Montserrat's location and distinctive shape, as well as the seven crosses in the way from Collbató calling to an identification with Mary in her sorrowful path along the Via Dolorosa, point to the presence of Jerusalem, an invisible presence that is not less real. These places also are a text that can be read: if you know the legend, you will see the steep cliffs and deep cracks and, at the same time, you will remember the religious origins of this physical phenomenon: the great grief of the Mountain of Montserrat at the moment of the death of Jesus that mirrors the split apart of the Golgotha; similarly, the crosses will evoke the via crucis of Jesus and the daily ritual performed by his Mother, and induce pious meditation.

We should recall that Abbot Garcias de Cisneros of Montserrat was one of the first Spanish mystics who adopted the practices of the *devotio moderna* in his use of meditative techniques, and published his *Ejercitatorio de la vida espiritual* (Exercises for the Spiritual Life) at Montserrat in 1500; his book dealt with formal prayer and meditation, and exerted much influence not only in the sixteenth but also in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>93</sup> Significantly, in the seventeenth century the *devotio moderna* laid emphasis on the importance of 'seeking Jerusalem within', another form of migration of the sacred that shifts attention from the geographical to a mental ideal image of Jerusalem. In effect, both in Judaism and Christianity (but not only), the divine or the sacred is not merely a transcendent entity 'out there'; it also is a presence in the depths of the self. The most important space was the inner space of the believer. Therefore, the deep emotions experienced in these sacred spaces nurtured the religious self and developed the religious identity.

93. Albareda, 'Bibliografía', p. 35. Not the least of all, Garcias de Cisneros's *Ejercitatorio* also influenced Ignatius de Loyola, who experienced Christ's call in 1522 while staying at the Montserrat Abbey. Many of Abbot Garcias de Cisneros's ideas were elaborated in Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* (1522-1524), which in turn influenced the spiritual life of the monks of Montserrat. See John C. Olin, 'The Idea of Pilgrimage in the Experience of Ignatius Loyola', *Church History*, 48 (1979), pp. 387-397 (p. 390). DOI: 10.2307/3164532.

## EMBLEMATIC IMAGES OF MONTSERRAT

Each sanctuary builds its identity on its singular features, and the visual images in its history books illustrate the set of concepts and norms that it aims to impart to the faithful. Montserrat bases its identity mainly on the symbolical interpretations of its location and unique configuration, and on the prodigious image of the Virgin that it houses. These narratives also created the iconography of its representative images. Since the establishment of a printing press in Montserrat in 1499, these images became a most direct and effective means of diffusion of information and indoctrination to all layers of society.

We distinguish between emblematic and narrative representations. Emblematic representations concentrate the characteristic elements of an object or a concept to facilitate a clear identification. From this point of view medals, objects that became popular since the fifteenth century,<sup>94</sup> are a most suitable medium to study the development of emblematic representations: the reduced size of their format, and their function as identifier of those who wear them as members of a brotherhood, or as pilgrims, or as devoted to a specific saint, image, or miraculous event require an optimal selection of representative elements. Naturally, these elements will usually be adopted in the creation of visual narratives too.

The Virgin holding the Child who saws the mountain's pinnacles is the typical iconographical scheme in medals. Interestingly, as Concepción Alarcón Román notes, while in the various texts on Montserrat the Virgin is the main protagonist and the Child has no significant role, in these emblematic images the Child has an important function as a signifier that identifies the Montserrat Mountain. Indeed, also in printed illustrations and stamps from the fifteenth and sixteenth century these basic iconographic elements are always present and stand out among the six recurring elements: the mountain, the image of the Virgin and the Child, the sanctuary, the hermitages, the way to the shrine, and pilgrims going up and down that way. We point again to an example that we already saw: the illustration opening Pere de Burgos's *Libro de la historia y milagros hechos a invocación de Nuestra señora de Montserrat* (Fig. 1), in the Pere de Montpezat edition of the year 1550. Yet, in view of its smaller size, the logo on the title page of that same edition presents only the basic identifiers: the mountain with a cross on top of one of its peaks, a large figure of the Virgin holding the Child who saws the cliffs, and a scheme of the sanctuary.

What puzzled us at the beginnings of this study is that the image of the Virgin with the Child serrating the mountain continued to be an important part of the emblematic representation of Montserrat in many of the

94. Manuel Forasté, 'Les primeres medalles de Montserrat', *Acta numismàtica*, 17-18 (1988), pp. 299-305 (p. 299).

seventeenth-century images.<sup>95</sup> As well remembered, at that time the highly significant perception of Montserrat as a mountain that, similarly to the Golgotha Hill, cracked out of grief over the death of Jesus, became the nucleus of the most widespread exegesis to the amazing shape of the Catalanian mountain. In other words, the explanation to the unique configuration as a result of the wish of the child Jesus to assist pilgrims by sawing the mountain had become less significant than an explanation based on the deep grief over the cruel death experienced by the adult Jesus to redeem all believers. What is more, in order to make this argument even sharper we may say that the Passion and redeeming death of Jesus had a strong resonance in the history of Montserrat.

Most probably, more than one factor made the image of the Mare de Déu depicted against the background of the Montserrat Mountain a better means to maximize the appeal and effectiveness of medals, stamps, and other representative images. First and foremost, the devotional complex developed around the cult of the miraculous image of the Virgin; the image was the focus of pilgrimage, the *raison d'être* of the complex. Its cult was justified by the fifteenth-century widespread tradition that dated the image at the beginnings of Christianity, and later added that it was crafted by St. Luke in Jerusalem, or sculpted by Nicodemus and painted by St. Luke at a time when the Virgin was still living her mortal life, that is to say, directly observing her sacred person.

Not the least, from a theological and spiritual point of view Maria was largely perceived as the kindest intercessor; her apotropaic powers were well-known, her example as *Mater dolorosa* was highly moving, and her compassion and therefore her assistance in obtaining indulgences made her the object of the prayers of all Catholic believers. These qualities were rightly appreciated by the monks in charge of the promotion and spread of the devotion to the Montserrat marian image and its sanctuary, and indeed they took profit of all the symbolical layers of meaning when selling the cultic objects to visitors. All in all, these same qualities made the iconic image a most valuable asset and successful weapon in the service of the Counter-Reformation.

Lastly, from the point of view of its visual perception and therefore its propaganda potential, this was an iconic image easily recognizable and remembered.<sup>96</sup> It could well be that an allusion to the splitting of cliffs and rocks at the death of Christ on the cross would shift the focus from the

95. Forasté, 'Les primeres medalles', passim. This iconography may have been the source of a novelty in the exhibition of the sculpted image in the sanctuary, in the 1660s at the latest: a saw in the hand of the Child, which in turn may have reinforced the printed images and other cultic objects in the second half of the seventeenth century. For the saw in the hand of the Child see Laplana, 'La imatge de la Mare de Déu', p. 27.

96. We should note that some of the iconographical types of the Montserrat medals present in the reverse an image of the Crucifixion. See Forasté, 'Les primeres medalles'. See type V, p.

essential miracle-working image of the Virgin, whereas the venerated iconic image of the Mare de Déu and the Montserrat Mountain in itself would confirm the presence of God at the site and virtually transfer the pilgrims to the Heavenly Jerusalem.

We should note that the mental associations between Montserrat and Jerusalem spread by history books, sermons, canticles, poems, and songs – as in the earliest known appearance of the legend equating Montserrat and the Golgotha in the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, and especially since the metaphorical descriptions blossomed in the early sixteenth century – became part of the collective memory and national identity of Catalonia. The work of the Montserrat monk Jacint Verdaguer i Santaló, one of the most prominent literary figures of the *Renaixença*, the national revival movement of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth century, mirrors better than any other work the spiritual perception of Montserrat and its symbolism, largely based on the absent and at the same time very intense presence of Jerusalem in the mountain. Describing Jerusalem as he perceived it from Sant Sabas in 1886, Verdaguer i Santaló emotively expressed his religious identity and national aspirations, which mirrored those of most Catalans:

The deep and distant whispers of the sacred waters of the Cedron that divide in two parts that mystical region like the stream of Santa Maria separated in two parts the Thebes and Thebaid of Montserrat, whose prayers, so pure and fragrant canticles would arise to the throne of the Almighty! Of the bottom of each bush would sprout a wave of perfume, of each rock a sigh of love, of each heart a rondeau of the most harmonious and beautiful hymn that had been risen from the earth.<sup>97</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

The fundamental myths and narratives of the Montserrat Mountain and the sanctuary at its heart, an inseparable whole by divine will, are based on biblical and local stories that refer to Jerusalem and harness the senses, in order to intensify the experience of the divine. The cliff-like shape, after which the massif is named, reflects the result of its deep grief over the death of Jesus in analogy to the Golgotha. Significantly, the Virgin chose

302, with Mary and John at the sides of the cross; type XII, p. 304, with the Virgin and saints, and type XIV, p. 304, with the Crucifixion and first stage of the Descent; the illustrations appear in page 305. We would not say that this scene represents the symbolic association between Montserrat and the Golgotha.

97. 'Los murmuris pregons y llunyans de les sagrades aygües del Cedron, que mig parteix exa mística regió, com el torrent de Santa María partía en dues la Tebes y Tebayda de Montserrat, ab quínes oracions, càntichs tan purs y flayrosos se'n pujaríen al trono del l'Altíssim! De cada peu de mata brotaría una alenada de perfum, de cada roca un sospir d'amor, de cada cor una posada de l'himne més armoniós y bonich qu'haja sortit de la terra'. *Dietari d'un pelegrí a Terra Santa* (Barcelona: Il·lustració Catalana, 1899), p. 38.

Montserrat as the sanctuary for her miraculous image, crafted by St. Luke, dressed by her, and brought to Iberia by St. Peter; moreover, the split of the mountain made possible its miraculous invention.

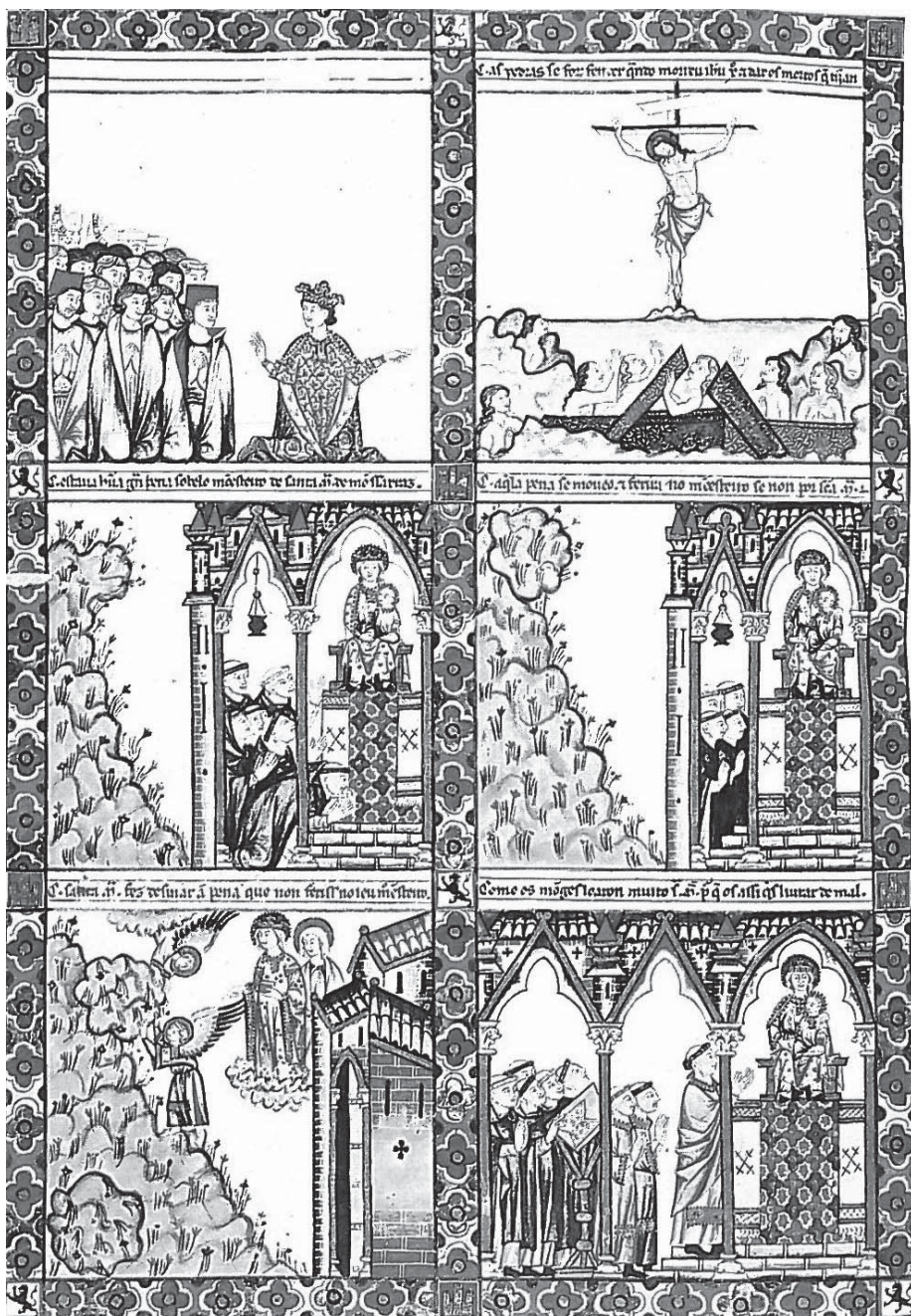
The equation Montserrat – Golgotha corresponded to the philosophical and theological concepts of the late Middle Ages, the *devotio moderna*'s ideal of an inner identification with Jesus's suffering, such as in the performance of a mental *via crucis* or Mary's path of Sorrows, since it laid emphasis on the importance of seeking Jerusalem in the depths of the self – a form of migration of the sacred that shifts attention from the geographical to a mental ideal image. Therefore, their Jerusalemite origins suffice to turn the mountain and the Virgin's image into carriers of the special blessings of the Holy City: in accordance with medieval thought, they participated in a mystical unity with their prototypes. Thus, even though physical similarities between Montserrat and Jerusalem seem to exist only in allegories, both justify the perception of Montserrat as a symbolical translation of Jerusalem as supported by the arguments presented herein.





Pere de Burgos, *Libro d'los Milagros hechos a invocación de nra señora de Montserrat: y dela Fundacion Hospitalidad y Orde de su sc̃ta casa; y del Sitio della y d'sus hermitas* (Barcelona: Pere de Montpezat, 1550), opening illustration (Courtesy of the Monastery of Our Lady of Montserrat Library).





*Cantigas de Santa Maria* of Alfons X (Escorial, MS T.I.1 (EI), 'Manuscrito Rico'), Cantiga no. 113, 'Por razon tenno d'obedecer as pedras à Madre do Rei, que quando morreu por nos sei que porend se foron fender' (Courtesy of the Monastery of Our Lady of Montserrat Library).